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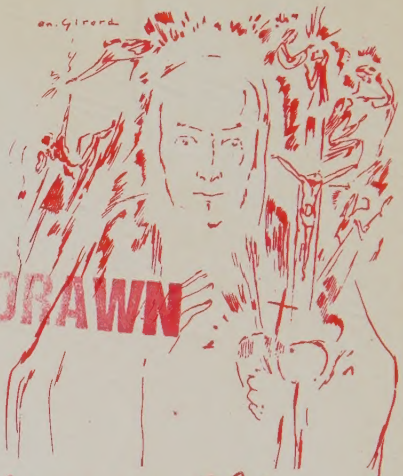

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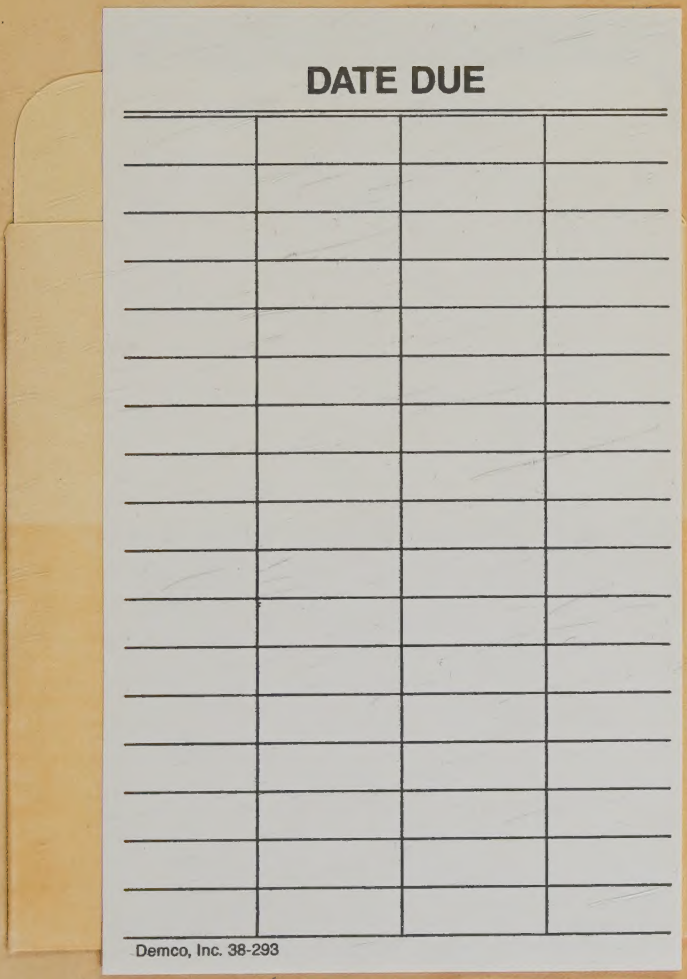

LUTHER

Nihil Obstat

C. Schut, d.d.,

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Imprimatur

Edm. Can. Surmont,

Vic. Gen.

Westmonasterii, die 23 Novembris, 1914.

LUTHER

BY

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AUTHORISED TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN BY

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EDITED BY

LUIGI CAPPADELTA

VOLUME IV

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.

BROADWAY HOUSE, 68–74 CARTER LANE, E.C.

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VOL. IV.

THE REFORMER (II)

LUTHER

CHAPTER XXI

PRINCELY MARRIAGES

1. Luther and Henry VIII of England. Bigamy instead of Divorce

In King Henry the Eighth's celebrated matrimonial controversy the Roman See by its final decision was energetically to vindicate the cause of justice, in spite of the fear that this might lead to the loss of England to Catholicism. The considered judgment was clear and definite: Rather than countenance the King's divorce from Queen Catherine, or admit bigamy as lawful, the Roman Church was prepared to see the falling away of the King and larger portion of the realm.[1]

In the summer, 1531, Luther was drawn into the controversy raging round the King's marriage, by an agent of King Henry's. Robert Barnes, an English Doctor of Divinity who had apostatised from the Church and was residing at Wittenberg, requested of Luther, probably at the King's instigation, an opinion regarding the lawfulness of his sovereign's divorce.

To Luther it was clear enough that there was no possibility of questioning the validity of Catherine's marriage. It rightly appeared to him impossible that the Papal dispensation, by virtue of which Catherine of Aragon had married the King after having been the spouse of his deceased brother, should be represented as sufficient ground for a

[1] On Clement the Seventh's earlier hesitation to come to a decision, see Ehses in "Vereinsschr. der Görresgesell.," 1909, 3, p. 7 ff., and the works there referred to; also Paulus, "Luther und die Polygamie" (on Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 9, p. 92, n.) in the "Lit. Beilage der Köln. Volksztng.," 1903, No. 48, and "Hist.-pol. Blätter," 135, 1905, p. 89 ff.: Pastor, "Hist. of the Popes" (Engl. trans.), 10, pp. 238–287. See below, p. 6 f.

divorce. This view he expressed with praiseworthy frankness in the written answer he gave Barnes.[1]

At the same time, however, Luther pointed out to the King a loophole by which he might be able to succeed in obtaining the object of his desire; by this concession, unfortunately, he branded his action as a pandering to the passions of an adulterous King. At the conclusion of his memorandum to Barnes he has the following: "Should the Queen be unable to prevent the divorce, she must accept the great evil and most insulting injustice as a cross, but not in any way acquiesce in it or consent to it. Better were it for her to allow the King to wed another Queen, after the example of the Patriarchs, who, in the ages previous to the law, had many wives; but she must not consent to being excluded from her conjugal rights or to forfeiting the title of Queen of England."[2]

It has been already pointed out that Luther, in consequence of his one-sided study of the Old Testament, had accustomed himself more and more to regard bigamy as something lawful.[3] That, however, he had so far ever given his formal consent to it in any particular instance there is no proof. In the case of Henry VIII, Luther felt less restraint than usual. His plain hint at bigamy as a way out of the difficulty was intended as a counsel ("*suasimus*"). Hence we can understand why he was anxious that his opinion should not be made too public.[4] When, in the same year (1531), he forwarded to the Landgrave of Hesse what purported to be a copy of the memorandum, the incriminating passage was carefully omitted.[5]

Melanchthon, too, had intervened in the affair, and had gone considerably further than Luther in recommending

[1] To Robert Barnes, Sep. 3, 1531, "Briefwechsel," 9, pp. 87–8. At the commencement we read: "*Prohibitio uxoris demortui fratris est positivi iuris, non divini.*" A later revision of the opinion also under Sep. 3, *ibid.*, pp. 92–8.

[2] "Briefwechsel," *ibid.*, p. 88. In the revision the passage still reads much the same: "Rather than sanction such a divorce I would permit the King to marry a second Queen . . . and, after the example of the olden Fathers and Kings, to have at the same time two consorts or Queens" (p. 93).

[3] See vol. iii., p. 259. [4] "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 87 *seq.*

[5] Luther's "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 91, n. 15. Cp. W. W. Rockwell, "Die Doppelehe des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen," Marburg, 1904, p. 214, n. 1, and below, p. 17, n. 2.

recourse to bigamy and in answering possible objections to polygamy.

In a memorandum of Aug. 23, Melanchthon declared that the King was entirely justified in seeking to obtain the male heirs with whom Catherine had failed to present him ; this was demanded by the interests of the State. He endeavours to show that polygamy is not forbidden by Divine law ; in order to avoid scandal it was, however, desirable that the King " should request the Pope to sanction his bigamy, permission being granted readily enough at Rome." Should the Pope refuse to give the dispensation, then the King was simply and of his own authority to have recourse to bigamy, because in that case the Pope was not doing his duty, for he was " bound in charity to grant this dispensation."[1] " Although I should be loath to allow polygamy generally, yet, in the present case, on account of the great advantage to the kingdom and perhaps to the King's conscience, I would say : The King may, with a good conscience (' *tutissimum est regi* '), take a second wife while retaining the first, because it is certain that polygamy is not forbidden by the Divine law, nor is it so very unusual." Melanchthon's ruthless manner of proceeding undoubtedly had a great influence on the other Wittenbergers, even though it cannot be maintained, as has been done, that he, and not Luther, was the originator of the whole theory ; there are too many clear and definite earlier statements of Luther's in favour of polygamy to disprove this. Still, it is true that the lax opinion broached by Melanchthon in favour of the King of England played a great part later in the matter of the bigamy of the Landgrave of Hesse.[2]

In the same year, however, there appeared a work on matrimony by the Lutheran theologian Johann Brenz in which, speaking generally and without reference to this

[1] Memorandum of Aug. 23, 1531, " Corp. ref.," 2, p. 520 *seq.*; see particularly p. 526 : Bigamy was allowable in the King's case, " *propter magnam utilitatem regni, fortassis etiam propter conscientiam regis. . . . Papa hanc dispensationem propter caritatem debet concedere.*" Cp. G. Ellinger, " Phil. Melanchthon," 1902, p. 325 f., and Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 208 ff.

[2] Cp. Th. Kolde, " Zeitschr. f. KG.," 13, 1892, p. 577, where he refers to the after-effect of Melanchthon's memorandum, instanced in Lenz, " Briefwechsel Philipps von Hessen," 1, p. 352, and to the material on which Bucer relied to win over the Wittenbergers to the Landgrave's side (" Corp. ref.," 3, p. 851 *seq.*).

particular case, he expressed himself very strongly against the lawfulness of polygamy. "The secular authorities," so Brenz insists, "must not allow any of their subjects to have two or more wives," they must, on the contrary, put into motion the "penalties of the Imperial Laws" against polygamy; no pastor may "bless or ratify" such marriages, but is bound to excommunicate the offenders.[1] Strange to say, the work appeared with a Preface by Luther in which, however, he neither praises nor blames this opinion.[2]

The Strasburg theologians, Bucer and Capito, as well as the Constance preacher, Ambrosius Blaurer, also stood up for the lawfulness of bigamy. When, however, this reached the ears of the Swiss theologians, Œcolampadius, in a letter of Aug. 20, exclaimed: "They were inclined to consent to the King's bigamy! But far be it from us to hearken more to Mohammed in this matter than to Christ!"[3]

In spite of the alluring hint thrown out at Wittenberg, the adulterous King, as everyone knows, did not resort to bigamy. It was Henry the Eighth's wish to be rid of his wife, and, having had her removed, he regarded himself as divorced. After the King had repudiated Catherine, Luther told his friends: "The Universities [i.e. those which sided with the English King] have declared that there must be a divorce. We, however, and the University of Louvain, decided differently. . . . We [viz. Luther and Melanchthon] advised the Englishman that it would be better for him to take a concubine than to distract his country and nation; yet in the end he put her away."[4]

When Clement VII declared the first marriage to be valid and indissoluble, and also refused to countenance any bigamy, Henry VIII retorted by breaking with the Church of Rome, carrying his country with him. For a while Clement had hesitated on the question of bigamy, since, in view of Cardinal Cajetan's opinion to the contrary, he found it difficult to convince himself that a dispensation could not

[1] "Wie in Ehesachen und den Fällen, so sich derhalben zutragen, nach göttlichem billigem Rechten christenlich zu handeln sei," 1531. Fol. D. 2b and D. 3a. Cp. Rockwell, p. 281, n. 1.

[2] The Preface reprinted in "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 305.

[3] Enders, "Luther's Briefwechsel," 9, p. 92.

[4] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 199: "*Suasimus Anglo, tolerabiliorem ei esse concubinatum quam*" to distract his whole country and nation, "*sed tandem eam repudiavit.*"

be given, and because he was personally inclined to be indulgent and friendly; finally, however, he gave Bennet, the English envoy, clearly to understand that the dispensation was not in his power to grant.[1] That he himself was not sufficiently versed in Canon Law, the Pope repeatedly admitted. "It will never be possible to allege the attitude of Clement VII as any excuse for the Hessian affair" (Ehses). It is equally impossible to trace the suggestion of bigamy back to the opinions prevailing in mediæval Catholicism.[2] No mediæval pope or confessor can be instanced who sanctioned bigamy, while there are numbers of theologians who deny the Pope's power to grant such dispensations; many even describe this negative opinion as the "*sententia communis.*"[3]

Of Cardinal Cajetan, the only theologian of note on the opposite side (see above, vol. iii., p. 261), W. Köhler remarks, alluding particularly to the recent researches of N. Paulus: "It never entered Cardinal Cajetan's head to deny that the ecclesiastical law categorically forbids polygamy."[4] Further: "Like Paulus, we may unhesitatingly admit that, *in this case*, it would have been better for Luther had he had behind him the guiding authority of the Church."[5]

Henry VIII, as was only natural, sought to make the best use of the friendship of the Wittenberg professors and Princes of the Schmalkalden League, against Rome and the Emperor. He despatched an embassy, though his overtures were not as successful as he might have wished.

We may describe briefly the facts of the case.

[1] Cp. Paulus in the "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 135, 1905, p. 90.

[2] [Though, of course, the hesitation evinced previously by St. Augustine ("*De bono conjugali*," "P.L.," xl., col. 385) must not be lost sight of. *Note to English Edition.*]

[3] Cp. Paulus, *ibid.*, 147, 1911, p. 505, where he adds: "And yet mediæval casuistry is alleged to have been the 'determining influence' in Luther's sanction of bigamy! Had Luther allowed himself to be guided by the mediæval theory and practice, he would never have given his consent to the Hessian bigamy."

[4] "Hist. Zeitschr.," 94, 1905, p. 409. Of Clement VII, Köhler writes (*ibid.*): "Pope Clement VII, who had to make a stand against Henry VIII of England in the question of bigamy, never suggested a dispensation for a second wife, though, to all appearance, he was not convinced that such a dispensation was impossible."

[5] "Theol. JB. für 1905," Bd. 25, p. 657, with reference to "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 135, p. 85.

The Schmalkalden Leaguers, from the very inception of the League, had been seeking the support both of England and of France. In 1535 they made a determined effort to bring about closer relations with Henry VIII, and, at the Schmalkalden meeting, the latter made it known that he was not unwilling to "join the Christian League of the Electors and Princes." Hereupon he was offered the "title and standing of patron and protector of the League." The political negotiations nevertheless miscarried, owing to the King's excessive demands for the event of an attack on his Kingdom.[1] The project of an alliance with the King of Denmark, the Duke of Prussia, and with Saxony and Hesse, for the purpose of a war against the Emperor, also came to nothing.

In these negotiations the Leaguers wanted first of all to reach an agreement with Henry in the matter of religion, whereas the latter insisted that political considerations should have the first place.

In the summer, 1535, Robert Barnes, the English plenipotentiary, was raising great and exaggerated hopes in Luther's breast of Henry's making common cause with the Wittenberg reformers.

Into his plans Luther entered with great zest, and consented to Melanchthon's being sent to England as his representative, for the purpose of further negotiations. As we now know from a letter of recommendation of Sep. 12, 1535, first printed in 1894, he recommended Barnes to the Chancellor Brück for an interview with the Elector, and requested permission for Melanchthon to undertake the journey to England. Joyfully he points out that "now the King offers to accept the Evangel, to join the League of our Princes and to allow our '*Apologia*' entry into his Kingdom." Such an opportunity must not be allowed to slip, for "the Papists will be in high dudgeon." Quite possibly God may have something in view.[2]

In England hopes were entertained that these favourable offers would induce a more friendly attitude towards the question of Henry's divorce. Concerning this Luther merely says in the letter cited: "In the matter of the royal marriage, the '*suspensio*' has already been decided," without going into any further particulars; he, however, reserves the case to be dealt with by the theologians exclusively.

In August, 1535, Melanchthon had dedicated one of his writings to the King of England, and had, on this occasion, lavished high praise on him. It was probably about this time that the King sent the presents to Wittenberg, to which Catherine Bora casually alludes in the Table-Talk. "Philip received several gifts from the Englishman, in all five hundred pieces of gold; for our own part we got at least fifty."[3]

[1] Cp. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People," Eng. Trans., 6, pp. 1 ff.

[2] Letter published by Th. Kolde in the "Zeitschr. für KG.," 14, 1894, p. 605.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 106, in 1540. Cp. "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 995.

Melanchthon took no offence at the cruel execution of Sir Thomas More or at the other acts of violence already perpetrated by Henry VIII; on the contrary, he gave his approval to the deeds of the royal tyrant, and described it as a commandment of God "to use strong measures against fanatical and godless men."[1] The sanguinary action of the English tyrant led Luther to express the wish, that a similar fate might befall the heads of the Catholic Church at Rome. In the very year of Bishop Fisher's execution he wrote to Melanchthon: "It is easy to lose our tempers when we see what traitors, thieves, robbers, nay devils incarnate the Cardinals, the Popes and their Legates are. Alas that there are not more Kings of England to put them to death!"[2] He also refers to the alleged horrors practised by the Pope's tools in plundering the Church, and asks: "How can the Princes and Lords put up with it?"

In Dec., 1535, a convention of the Schmalkalden Leaguers, at Melanchthon's instance, begged the envoys despatched by Henry, who were on their way to Wittenberg, to induce their master to promote the Confession of Augsburg—unless, indeed, as they added with unusual consideration, "they and the King should be unanimous in thinking that something in the Confession might be improved upon or made more in accordance with the Word of God."[3]

Just as in the advances made by the King to Wittenberg "the main point had been to obtain a favourable pronouncement from the German theologians in the matter of his divorce," so too in consenting to discuss the Confession of Augsburg he was actuated by the thought that this would lead to a discussion on the Papal power and the question of the divorce, i.e. to those points which the King had so much at heart.[4]

On the arrival immediately after of the envoys at Wittenberg they had the satisfaction of learning from Luther and his circle, that the theologians had already changed their minds in the King's favour concerning the lawfulness of marriage with a brother's widow. Owing to the influence of Osiander, whom Henry VIII had won over to his side, they now had come to regard such marriages as contrary to the natural moral law. Hence Henry's new marriage might be considered valid. They were not, however, as yet ready to draw this last inference from

[1] "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 928. Melanchthon's language, and Luther's too, changed when, later, Henry VIII caused those holding Lutheran opinions to be executed. See below, p. 12 f.

[2] Beginning of Dec., 1535. "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 275: "*Utinam haberent plures reges Angliæ, qui illos occiderent!*"

[3] "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 1032, n. 1383. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 369.

[4] Thus G. Mentz, the editor of the "Wittenberger Artickel," drawn up for the envoys from England ("Quellenschriften zur Gesch. des Prot.," Hft. 2, 1905), pp. 3 and 4. He points out, p. 7, that King Henry, in a reply to Wittenberg (March 12, 1536, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 48), requested "support in the question of the divorce" and desired certain things to be modified in the "*Confessio*" and the "*Apologia*."

the invalidity of the previous marriage between the King and Catherine.[1]

Luther, however, became more and more convinced that marriage with a brother's widow was invalid; in 1542, for instance, on the assumption of the invalidity of such a union, he unhesitatingly annulled the marriage of a certain George Schud, as a "devilish abomination" ("*abominatio diaboli*").[2]

The spokesman of the English mission, Bishop Edward Fox, demanded from Luther the admission that the King had separated from his first wife "on very just grounds." Luther, however, would only agree that he had done so "on very many grounds." He said later, in conversation, that his insistence on this verbal nicety had cost him three hundred Gulden, which he would have received from England in the event of his compliance.[3] He cannot indeed be accused of having been, from ecclesiastico-political motives, too hasty in gratifying the King's demands in the matter of the divorce. Yet, on the other hand, it is not unlikely that the desire to pave the way for a practical understanding was one of the motives for his mode of action. His previous outspoken declarations against any dissolution of the Royal marriage compelled him to assume an attitude not too strongly at variance with his earlier opinion.

After the new marriage had taken place negotiations with England continued, principally with the object of securing such acceptance of the new doctrine as might lead to a politico-religious alliance between that country and the Schmalkalden Leaguers. Luther, however, stubbornly refused to concede anything to the King in the matter of his chief doctrines, for instance, regarding Justification or the rejection of the Mass.

The articles agreed upon at the lengthy conferences held during the early months of 1536—and made public only in 1905 (see above, p. 9, n. 4)—failed to satisfy the King, although they displayed a very conciliatory spirit. Melanchthon outdid himself in his endeavour to render the Wittenberg teaching

[1] For full particulars concerning the change, see Rockwell, *loc. cit.*, 216 ff. The latter says, p. 217: "Luther's opinion obviously changed [before March 12, 1536]. . . . Yet he expressed himself even in 1536 against the divorce [Henry the Eighth's]; the prohibition [of marriage with a sister in-law] from which the Mosaic Law admitted exceptions, might be dispensed, whereas the prohibition of divorce could not be dispensed," and, p. 220: "In the change of 1536 the influence of Osiander is unmistakable. . . . Cranmer, when at Ratisbon in 1532, had visited Osiander several times at Nuremberg, and finally won him over to the side of the King of England." At the end Rockwell sums up as follows (p. 222): "The expedient of bigamy . . . was approved by Luther, Melanchthon, Grynæus, Bucer and Capito, but repudiated by Œcolampadius and Zwingli. Hence we cannot be surprised that Luther, Melanchthon and Bucer should regard favourably the Hessian proposal of bigamy, whereas Zwingli's successors at Zürich, viz. Bullinger and Gualther, opposed it more or less openly."

[2] On Feb. 16, 1542, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 436. Cp. *ibid.*, p. 584, Letter of Jan. 18, 1545.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 152, in 1540.

acceptable. "It is true that the main points of faith were not sacrificed," remarks the discoverer and editor of the articles in question, "but the desire to please noticeable in their form, even in such questions as those concerning the importance of good works, monasteries, etc., is nevertheless surprising."[1] Luther himself, in a letter of April 29, 1536, to the Electoral Vice-Chancellor Burkhard, spoke of the concessions made in these articles as the final limit; to go further would be to concede to the King of England what had been refused to the Pope and the Emperor; "at Augsburg [in 1530] we might have come to terms more easily with the Pope and the Emperor, nay, perhaps we might do so even now." To enter into an ecclesiastico-political alliance with the English would, he considers, be "dangerous," for the Schmalkalden Leaguers "were not all of one mind"; hence the (theological) articles ought first to be accepted; the League was, however, a secular matter and therefore he would beg the "beloved Lords and my Gracious Master to consider" whether they could accept it without a previous agreement being reached on the point of theology.[2]

Though Luther and the Princes set great store on the projected alliance, on account of the increase of strength it would have brought the German Evangelicals, yet their hopes were to be shattered, for the articles above referred to did not find acceptance in England. Luther was later on to declare that everything had come to nought because King Henry wished to be head of the Protestants in Germany, which the Elector of Saxony would not permit: "Let the devil take the great Lords! This rogue ('*is nebulo*') wanted to be proclaimed head of our religion, but to this the Elector would in no wise agree; we did not even know what sort of belief he had."[3] Probably the King demanded a paramount influence in the Schmalkalden League, and the German Princes were loath to be deprived of the direction of affairs.

After all hopes of an agreement had vanished Henry VIII made no secret of his antipathy for the Lutheran teaching.

The quondam Defender of the Faith even allowed himself to be carried away to acts of bloodshed. In 1540 he caused Luther's friend, Robert Barnes, the agent already referred to, to be burnt at the stake as a heretic. Barnes had adopted the Lutheran doctrine of Justification. It was not on this account alone, however, that he was obnoxious to the King,

[1] Mentz, *loc. cit.*, p. 11.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 52, p. 133 ("Briefwechsel," 10, p. 327).
[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 174, in 1540.

but also because the latter had grown weary of Anne of Cleves, whom Barnes and Thomas Cromwell, the King's favourite, had given him as a fourth consort, after Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour. Cromwell, though not favourably disposed to Lutheranism, was executed a few days before. On April 9, 1536, Luther had written to Cromwell a very polite letter, couched in general terms,[1] in answer to a courteous missive from that statesman handed to him by Barnes. From Luther's letter we see that Cromwell "had been described to him in too favourable a light,"[2] as though predisposed to the Lutheran doctrine or to regard Luther as a divinely sent teacher. Luther deceived himself if he fancied that Cromwell was ready to "work for the cause"; the latter remained as unfriendly to Lutheranism proper as the King himself.

In the year of Barnes's execution Melanchthon wrote the letter to Veit Dietrich in which he expresses the pious wish, that God would send a brave murderer to bring the King to the end he deserved.[3]

Luther, on his side, declared: "The devil himself rides astride this King"; "I am glad that we have no part in his blasphemy." He boasted, so Luther says, of being head of the Church of England, a title which no bishop, much less a King, had any right to, more particularly one who with his crew had "vexed and tortured Christ and His Church."[4] In 1540 Luther spoke sarcastically of the King's official title: "Under Christ the supreme head on earth of the English Church,"[5] remarking, that, in that case, "even the angels are excluded."[6] Of Melanchthon's dedication of some of his books to the King, Luther says, that this had been of little service. "In future I am not going to dedicate any of my books to anyone. It brought Philip no good in the case of the bishop [Albert of Mayence], of the Englishman, or of the Hessian [the Landgrave Philip]."[7] Still more fierce became his hatred and disappointment when he found the King consorting with his sworn enemies, Duke George, and Albert, Elector of Mayence.[8]

[1] "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 324. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 326.
[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 400, with reference to "Corp. ref," 3, p. 1076.
[4] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 537, where the words have been transferred to July 10, 1539.
[5] Cp. "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 1029. [6] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 178.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 145. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 198.

When he heard the news of Barnes having been cast into prison, he said: "This King wants to make himself God. He lays down articles of faith and forbids marriage under pain of death, a thing which even the Pope scrupled to do. I am something of a prophet and, as what I prophesy comes true, I shall refrain from saying more."[1]

Luther never expressed any regret regarding his readiness to humour the King's lusts or regarding his suggestion of bigamy.

The Landgrave Philip of Hesse, however, referred directly to the proposal of bigamy made to the King of England, when he requested Luther's consent to his own project of taking a second wife. The Landgrave had got to hear of the proposal in spite of the unlucky passage having been struck out of the deed.

The history of the Hessian bigamy is an incident which throws a curious light on Luther's exceptional indulgence towards princely patrons of the Evangel in Germany.

2. The Bigamy of Philip of Hesse

As early as 1526 Philip of Hesse, whose conduct was far from being conspicuous for morality, had submitted to Luther the question whether Christians were allowed to have more than one wife. The Wittenberg Professor gave a reply tallying with his principles as already described;[2] instead of pointing out clearly that such a thing was divinely forbidden to all Christians, was not to be dispensed from by any earthly authority, and that such extra marriages would be entirely invalid, Luther refused to admit unconditionally the invalidity of such unions. Such marriages, he stated, gave scandal to Christians, "for without due cause and necessity even the old Patriarchs did not take more than one wife"; it was incumbent that we should be able "to appeal to the Word of God," but no such Word existed in favour of polygamy, "by which the same could

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 145. On account of his cruelty he says of Henry VIII, in Aug., 1540: "I look upon him not as a man but as a devil incarnate. He has added to his other crimes the execution of the Chancellor Cromwell, whom, a few days previously, he had made Lord Chief Justice of the Kingdom" (*ibid.*, p. 174).

[2] For Luther's previous statements in favour of polygamy, see vol. iii., p. 259 ff.; and above, p. 4.

be proved to be well pleasing to God in the case of Christians"; "hence I am unable to recommend it, but would rather dissuade from it, especially for Christians, unless some great necessity existed, for instance were the wife to contract leprosy or become otherwise unfit."[1] It is not clear whether Philip was interested in the matter for personal reasons, or simply because some of his subjects were believers in polygamy.

Luther's communication, far from diverting the Prince from his project, could but serve to make him regard it as feasible; provided that the "great necessity" obtained and that he had "the Word of God on his side," then the step could "not be prevented." By dint of a judicious interpretation of Scripture and with expert theological aid, the obstacles might easily be removed.

The Hessian Prince also became acquainted with Luther's statements on bigamy in his Commentary on Genesis published in the following year. To them the Landgrave Philip appealed expressly in 1540; the preacher Anton Corvinus having suggested that he should deny having committed bigamy, he replied indignantly: "Since you are so afraid of it, why do you not suppress what Luther wrote more than ten years ago on Genesis; did he and others not write publicly concerning bigamy: 'Advise it I do not, forbid it I cannot'? If you are allowed to write thus of it publicly, you must expect that people will act up to your teaching."[2]

The question became a pressing one for Luther, and began to cast a shadow over his wayward and utterly untraditional interpretation of the Bible, when, in 1539, the Landgrave resolved to take as an additional wife, besides Christina the daughter of George of Saxony, who had now grown distasteful to him, the more youthful Margeret von der Sale. From Luther Margeret's mother desired a favourable pronouncement, in order to be able with a good conscience to give her consent to her daughter's wedding.

[1] To Philip of Hesse, Nov. 28, 1526, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 411 f.
[2] "Briefwechsel des A. Corvinus," ed. Tschackert, 1900, p. 81.

Philip Seeks the Permission of Wittenberg.

Early in Nov., 1539, Gereon Sailer, an Augsburg physician famous for his skill in handling venereal cases, who had treated the Landgrave at Cassel, was sent by Philip to Bucer at Strasburg to instruct the latter to bring the matter before the theologians of Wittenberg. Sailer was a friend of the innovations, and Bucer was highly esteemed by the Landgrave as a theologian and clever diplomatist.

Bucer was at first sorely troubled in conscience and hesitated to undertake the commission; Sailer reported to the Landgrave that, on hearing of the plan, he had been "quite horrified" and had objected "the scandal such an innovation in a matter of so great importance and difficulty might cause among the weak followers of the Evangel."[1] After thinking the matter over for three days Bucer, however, agreed to visit the Landgrave on Nov. 16 and receive his directions. A copy of the secret and elaborate instructions given him by Philip concerning the appeal he was to make to Luther still exists in the handwriting of Simon Bing, the Hessian Secretary, in the Marburg Archives together with several old copies,[2] as also the original rough draft in Philip's own hand.[3] The envoy first betook himself to the meeting of the Schmalkalden Leaguers, held at Arnstadt on Nov. 20, to confer upon a new mission to be sent to England; on Dec. 4 he was at Weimar with the Elector of Saxony and on the 9th he had reached Wittenberg.

The assenting answer given by Luther and Melanchthon bears the date of the following day.[4] It is therefore quite true that the matter was settled "in haste," as indeed the text of the reply states. Bucer doubtless did his utmost to

[1] "Briefwechsel Landgraf Philipps des Grossmütigen von Hessen mit Bucer, hg. und erläutert von Max Lenz" ("Publikationen aus den Kgl. preuss. Staatsarchiven," Bd. 5, 28 und 47=1, 2, 3), 1, 1880, p. 345. Cp. N. Paulus, "Die hessische Doppelehe im Urteile der protest. Zeitgenossen," "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 147, 1911 (p. 503 ff., 561 ff.) p. 504.

[2] We quote the instructions throughout from the most reliable edition, viz. that in "Luthers Briefwechsel," 12 (1910, p. 301 ff.), which G. Kawerau continued and published after the death of Enders.

[3] "Philipps Briefwechsel," ed. Lenz, 1, p. 352.

[4] Best given in "Luthers Briefwechsel," 12, p. 319 ff. Cp. "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 258 ff.; "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 237, which gives only the Latin version; "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 851 *seq.*; "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 18, 1846, p. 236 ff.

prevent the theologians from having recourse to subterfuge or delay.

The above-mentioned instructions contain a sad account of the " dire necessity " which seemed to justify the second marriage : The Landgrave would otherwise be unable to lead a moral life ; he was urged on by deep distress of conscience ; not merely did he endure temptations of the flesh beyond all measure, but, so runs his actual confession, he was quite unable to refrain from " fornication, unchastity and adultery."[1] The confession dealt with matters which were notorious. It also contains the admission, that he had not remained true to his wife for long, in fact not for more than " three weeks " ; on account of his sense of sin he had " not been to the Sacrament." As a matter of fact he had abstained from Communion from 1526 to 1539, viz. for thirteen years, and until his last attack of the venereal disease.

But were the scruples of conscience thus detailed to the Wittenbergers at all real ? Recently they have been characterised as the " outcome of a bodily wreck."

" I am unable to practise self-restraint," Philip of Hesse had declared on another occasion, " I am forced to commit fornication or worse, with women." His sister Elisabeth had already advised him to take a concubine in place of so many prostitutes. In all probability Philip would have abducted Margaret von der Sale had he not hoped to obtain her in marriage through the intervention of her relations and with Luther's consent. A Protestant historian has recently pointed this out when dealing with Philip's alleged " distress of conscience."[2]

Bucer was well able to paint in dismal hues the weakness of his princely client ; he pointed out, " how the Landgrave, owing to his wife's deficiencies, was unable to remain chaste ; how he had previously lived so and so, which was neither good nor Evangelical, especially in one of the mainstays of the party."[3] In that very year Philip of Hesse had, as a matter of fact, been ailing from a certain

[1] " Luthers Briefwechsel," 12, p. 301.

[2] W. Köhler, " Die Doppelehe des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen " (" Histor. Zeitschr.," 94, 1905, p. 385 ff.), p. 399, 400.

[3] Luther's letter, June, 1540, to the Elector of Saxony (below, p. 37) ed. Seidemann from a Kiel MS. in his edition of " Lauterbachs Tagebuch," p. 196 ff.

malady brought upon him by his excesses ; he himself spoke of it as a " severe attack of the French sickness [syphilis], which is the penalty of an immoral life."[1]

True to his instructions, Bucer went on to say that the Landgrave had firmly " resolved " to make use against his unchastity—which he neither could nor would refrain from with his present wife—of " such means as God permitted and did not forbid," viz. to wed a second wife. The two Wittenbergers had perforce to listen while Bucer, as the mouthpiece of the Landgrave, put forth as the grounds of his client's firm resolve the very proofs from Scripture which they themselves had adduced in favour of polygamy ; they were informed that, according to the tenor of a memorandum, " both Luther and Philip had counselled the King of England not to divorce his first wife, but rather to take another."[2] It was accordingly the Landgrave's desire that they should " give testimony " that his deed was not unjust, and that they should " make known in the press and from the pulpit what was the right course to pursue in such circumstances " ; should they have scruples about doing this for fear of scandal or evil consequences, they were at least to give a declaration in writing : " That were I to do it secretly, yet I should not offend God, but that they regard it as a real marriage, and would meanwhile devise ways and means whereby the matter might be brought openly before the world " ; otherwise, the instructions proceeded, the " wench " whom the Prince was about to take to himself might complain of being looked upon as an improper person ; as " nothing can ever be kept secret," " great scandal " would indeed arise were not the true state of the case known. Besides, he fully intended to retain his present wife and to consider her as a rightful spouse, and her children alone were to be the " lawful princes of the land " ; nor would he ask for any more wives beyond this second one. The Landgrave even piously reminds Luther and Melanchthon " not to heed overmuch the opinion of the world, and human respect, but to look to God and what He has commanded or forbidden, bound or loosened " ; he, for his part, was determined not to " remain any longer in the bonds of the devil."

Philip was careful also to remind them that, if, after putting into execution his project, he was able to " live and die with a good conscience," he would be " all the more free to fight for the

[1] Thus Philip to his friend, Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg, Oct., 1540, when seeking to obtain his agreement to the bigamy. Ulrich, however, advised him to give up the project, which would be a great blow to the Evangel. F. L. Heyd, " Ulrich, Herzog von Württemberg," 3, p. 226 ff.

[2] Cp. above, p. 3 ff.; also Enders' " Luthers Briefwechsel," 12, p. 308, where it is pointed out that in the copy of the letter to Henry VIII sent to Hesse (*ibid.*, 9, p. 81 ff.) the passage in question concerning bigamy was omitted ; the Landgrave Philip, however, learnt the contents of the passage, doubtless from Bucer.

Evangelical cause as befitted a Christian"; "whatever they [Luther and Melanchthon] shall tell me is right and Christian—whether it refers to monastic property or to other matters—that they will find me ready to carry out at their behest." On the other hand, as an urgent motive for giving their consent to his plan, he broadly hinted, that, "should he not get any help from them" he would, "by means of an intermediary, seek permission of the Emperor, even though it should cost me a lot of money"; the Emperor would in all likelihood do nothing without a "dispensation from the Pope"; but in such a matter of conscience neither the Pope nor the Emperor were of any great account, since he was convinced that his "design was approved by God"; still, their consent (the Pope and Emperor's) would help to overcome "human respect"; hence, should he be unable to obtain "consolation from this party [the Evangelical]," then the sanction of the other party was "not to be despised." Concerning the request he felt impelled to address to the Emperor, he says, in words which seem to convey a threat, that although he would not for any reason on earth prove untrue to the Evangel, or aid in the onslaught on the Evangelical cause, yet, the Imperial party might "use and bind" him to do things "which would not be to the advantage of the cause." Hence, it was in their interest to assist him in order that he might "not be forced to seek help in quarters where he had no wish to look for it."

After again stating that he "took his stand on the Word of God" he concludes with a request for the desired "Christian, written" testimony, "in order that thereby I may amend my life, go to the Sacrament with a good conscience and further all the affairs of our religion with greater freedom and contentment. Given at Milsungen on the Sunday *post Catharine anno etc.* 39."

The Wittenberg theologians now found themselves in a quandary. Luther says: "We were greatly taken aback at such a declaration on account of the frightful scandal which would follow."[1] Apart from other considerations, the Landgrave had already been married sixteen years and had a number of sons and daughters by his wife; the execution of the project would also necessarily lead to difficulties at the Courts of the Duke of Saxony and of the Elector, and also, possibly, at that of the Duke of Würtemberg. They were unaware that Margaret von Sale had already been chosen as a second wife, that Philip had secured the consent of his wife Christina, and that the way

[1] Letter of Luther to the Elector of Saxony. See above, p. 16, n. 3, and below, p. 37 f.

for a settlement with the bride's mother had already been paved.[1]

The view taken by Rockwell, viz. that the form of the memorandum to be signed by Luther and Melanchthon had already been drawn up in Hesse by order of Philip, is, however, erroneous; nor was the document they signed a copy of such a draft.[2]

It is much more likely that the lengthy favourable reply of the Wittenbergers was composed by Melanchthon. It was signed with the formula: "Wittenberg, Wednesday after St. Nicholas, 1539. Your Serene Highness's willing and obedient servants [and the signatures] Martinus Luther, Philippus Melanchthon, Martinus Bucerus."[3] The document is now among the Marburg archives.

Characteristically enough the idea that the Landgrave is, and must remain, the protector of the new religious system appears at the commencement as well as at the close of the document. The signatories begin by congratulating the Prince, that God "has again helped him out of sickness," and pray that heaven may preserve him, for the "poor Church of Christ is small and forsaken, and indeed stands in need of pious lords and governors"; at the end God is again implored to guide and direct him; above all, the Landgrave must have nothing to do with the Imperialists.

The rest of the document, apart from pious admonitions, consists of the declaration, that they give their "testimony that, in a case of necessity," they were "unable to condemn" bigamy, and that, accordingly, his "conscience may be at rest" should the Landgrave "utilise" the Divine dispensation. In so many words they sanction the request submitted to them, because "what was permitted concerning matrimony in the Mosaic Law was not prohibited in the Gospel." Concerning the circumstances of the request they, however, declined "to give anything in print," because otherwise the matter would be "understood and accepted as a general law and from it [i.e. a general sanction of polygamy] much grave scandal and complaint would arise." The Landgrave's wish that they should speak of the case from the pulpit, is also passed over in silence. Nor did they reply to his invitation to them to consider by what ways and means the matter might be brought publicly before the world.

[1] Cp. W. W. Rockwell, "Die Doppelehe des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen," Marburg, 1904, p. 30 ff.

[2] This error has been confuted by Th. Brieger on good grounds in the "Untersuchungen über Luther und die Nebenehe des Landgrafen Philipp," in "Zeitschr. f. KG.," 29, p. 174 ff.; *ibid.*, p. 403 ff. "Hist. Jahrb.," 26, 1905, p. 405 (N. Paulus).

[3] Dec. 10, 1539, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 12, p. 326.

On the contrary, they appear to be intent on burying in discreet silence a marriage so distasteful to them. It even looks as though they were simple enough to think that such concealment would be possible, even in the long run. What they fear is, above all, the consequences of its becoming common property. In no way, so they declare, was any universal law, any "public precedent" possible, whereby a plurality of wives might be made lawful; according to its original institution marriage had signified "the union of two persons only, not of more"; but, in view of the examples of the Old Covenant, they "were unable to condemn it," if, in a quite exceptional case, "recourse were had to a dispensation . . . and a man, with the advice of his pastor, took another wife, not with the object of introducing a law, but to satisfy his need."

As for instances of such permission having been given in the Church, they were able to quote only two: First, the purely legendary case of Count Ernest of Gleichen—then still regarded as historical—who, during his captivity among the Turks in 1228, had married his master's daughter, and, then, after his escape, and after having learnt that his wife was still living, applied for and obtained a Papal dispensation for bigamy; secondly, the alleged practice in cases of prolonged and incurable illness, such as leprosy, to permit, occasionally, the man to take another wife. The latter, however, can only refer to Luther's own practice, or to that followed by the teachers of the new faith.[1] In 1526 Luther had informed the Landgrave that this was allowable in case of "dire necessity," "for instance, where the wife was leprous, or had been otherwise rendered unfit."[2] Acting upon this theory he was soon to give a decision in a particular case;[3] in May or June, 1540, he even stated that he had several times, when one of the parties had contracted leprosy, privately sanctioned the bigamy of the healthy party, whether man or woman.[4]

They are at great pains to impress on the Landgrave that he must "take every possible care that this matter be not made public in the world," otherwise the dispensation would be taken as a precedent by others, and also would be made to serve as a weapon against them and the Evangel." "Hence, seeing how great scandal would be caused, we humbly beg your Serene Highness to take this matter into serious consideration."

They also admonish him "to avoid fornication and adultery"; they had learnt with "great sorrow" that the Landgrave "was burdened with such evil lusts, of which the consequences to be

[1 Unless the reference be to certain reputed *consulta* of Gregory II or of Alexander III. Cp. "P.L.," lxxxix., 525, and Decr. IV, 15, iii. *Note to English Ed.*]

2 See above, p. 14.

3 Cp. Luther's "Consideration," dated Aug. 23, 1527, concerning the husband of a leprous wife, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 406 ("Briefwechsel," 6, p. 80), where he says: "I can in no wise prevent him or forbid his taking another wedded wife." He here takes for granted the consent of the leprous party. 4 Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 141.

feared were the Divine punishment, illness and other perils"; such conduct, outside of matrimony, was "no small sin"—as they proceed to prove from Scripture; they rejoiced, however, that the Prince felt "pain and remorse" for what he had done. Although monogamy was in accordance with the original institution of marriage, yet it was their duty to tell him that, "seeing that your Serene Highness has informed us that you are not able to refrain from an immoral life, we would rather that your Highness should be in a better state before God, and live with a good conscience for your Highness's own salvation and the good of your land and people. And, as your Serene Highness has determined to take another wife, we consider that this should be kept secret, no less than the dispensation, viz. that your Serene Highness and the lady in question, and a few other trustworthy persons, should be apprised of your Highness's conscience and state of mind in the way of confession."

"From this," they continue, "no great gossip or scandal will result, for it is not unusual for Princes to keep '*concubinas*,' and, though not everyone is aware of the circumstances, yet reasonable people will bear this in mind and be better pleased with such a manner of life than with adultery or dissolute and immoral living."

Yet, once again, they point out that, were the bigamy to become a matter of public knowledge, the opinion would gain ground that polygamy was perfectly lawful to all, and that everyone might follow the precedent; the result would also be that the enemies of the Evangel would cry out that the Evangelicals were not one whit better than the Anabaptists, who were likewise polygamists and, in fact, just the same as the Turks. Further, the great Lords would be the first to give the example to private persons to do likewise. As it was, the Hessian aristocracy was bad enough, and many of its members were strongly opposed to the Evangel on earthly grounds; these would become still more hostile were the bigamy to become publicly known. Lastly, the Prince must bear in mind the injury to his "good name" which the tidings of his act would cause amongst foreign potentates.

A paragraph appended to the memorandum is, according to recent investigation, from Luther's own pen and, at any rate, is quite in his style.[1] It refers to Philip's threat to seek the Emperor's intervention, a step which would not have been at all to the taste of the Wittenbergers, for it was obvious that this would cripple Philip's action as Protector of the Evangelicals. This menace had plainly excited and troubled Luther. He declares in the concluding sentences, that the Emperor before whom the Prince threatened to lay the case, was a man who looked upon adultery as a

[1] Cp. the remarks in "Luthers Briefwechsel," 12, p. 327 f., and Brieger, *loc. cit.*, p. 192.

small sin; there was great reason to fear that he shared the faith of the Pope, Cardinals, Italians, Spaniards and Saracens; he would pay no heed to the Prince's request but only use him as a cat's-paw. They had found him out to be a false and faithless man, who had forgotten the true German spirit. The Emperor, as the Landgrave might see for himself, did not trouble himself about any Christian concerns, left the Turks unopposed and was only interested in fomenting plots in Germany for the increase of the Burgundian power. Hence it was to be hoped that pious German Princes would have nothing to do with his faithless practices.

Such are the contents of Luther and Melanchthon's written reply. Bucer, glad of the success achieved, at once proceeded with the memorandum to the Electoral Court.

This theological document, the like of which had never been seen, is unparalleled in the whole of Church history. Seldom indeed has exegetical waywardness been made to serve a more momentous purpose. The Elector, Johann Frederick of Saxony, was, at a later date, quite horrified, as he said, at "a business the like of which had not been heard of for many ages."[1] Sidonie, the youthful Duchess of Saxony, complained subsequently, that, "since the Birth of Christ, no one had done such a thing."[2] Bucer's fears had not been groundless "of the scandal of such an innovation in a matter of so great importance and difficulty among the weak followers of the Evangel."[3]

Besides this, the sanction of bigamy given in the document in question is treated almost as though it denoted the commencement of a more respectable mode of life incapable of giving any "particular scandal"; for amongst the common people the newly wedded wife would be looked upon as a concubine, and such it was quite usual for Princes to keep. Great stress is laid on the fact that the secret bigamy would prevent adultery and other immorality. Apart, however, from these circumstances, the sanctioning, largely on the strength of political considerations, of an

[1] Seckendorf, "Commentarius de Lutheranismo," 3, 1694, p. 278.

[2] E. Brandenburg, "Politische Korrespondenz des Herzogs Moritz von Sachsen," 2, 1903, p. 101.

[3] Sailer to Philip of Hesse, Nov. 6, 1539, "Briefwechsel Philipps," 1, p. 345; above, p. 15. Other similar statements by contemporaries are to be found in the article of N. Paulus (above, p. 15, n. 1).

exception to the universal New-Testament prohibition, is painful. Anyone, however desirous of finding extenuating circumstances for Luther's decision, can scarcely fail to be shocked at this fact. The only excuse that might be advanced would be, that Philip, by his determination to take this step and his threat of becoming reconciled to the Emperor, exercised pressure tantamount to violence, and that the weight of years, his scorn for the Church's matrimonial legislation and his excessive regard for his own interpretation of the Old Testament helped Luther to signify his assent to a plan so portentous.

The Bigamy is Consummated and made Public.

The object of Bucer's hasty departure for the Court of the Elector Johann Frederick of Saxony was to dispose him favourably towards the impending marriage. In accordance with his instructions from Hesse, he was to submit to this Prince the same arguments which had served him with the two Wittenbergers, for the superscription of the instructions ran: "What Dr. Martin Bucer is to demand of D. Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon, and, should he see fit, after that also of the Elector."[1] In addition to this he had in the meantime received special instructions for this delicate mission to Weimar.[2]

The Landgrave looked upon an understanding with the Elector as necessary, not merely on account of his relationship with him and out of consideration for Christina his first wife, who belonged to the House of Saxony, but also on account of the ecclesiastico-political alliance in which they stood, which made the Elector's support seem to him quite as essential as the sanction of the Wittenberg theologians.

Bucer treated with Johann Frederick at Weimar on 15 or 16 Dec. and reached some sort of understanding, as we learn from the Elector's written reply to the Landgrave bearing the latter date. Bucer represents him as saying: If it is impossible to remove the scandal caused by the Landgrave's life in any other way, he would ask, as a

[1] "Luthers Briefwechsel," 12, p. 301.
[2] "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 356 ff., and Burkhardt, "Luthers Briefwechsel," p. 388.

brother, that the plan should not be executed in any other way than "that contained in our—Dr. Luther's, Philip's and my own—writing"; upon this he was unable to improve; he was also ready to "lend him fraternal assistance in every way" should any complications arise from this step.[1] In return, in accordance with the special instructions given to Bucer, he received from the Landgrave various political concessions of great importance: viz. support in the matter of the Duke of Cleves, help in his difficulties about Magdeburg, the eventual renunciation of Philip's title to the inheritance of his father-in-law, Duke George, and, finally, the promise to push his claims to the Imperial crown after the death of Charles V, or in the event of the partitioning of the Empire.

The Elector, like his theologians, was not aware that the "lady" (she is never actually named) had already been chosen. Margaret von der Sale, who was then only seventeen years of age, was the daughter of a lady-in-waiting to Philip's sister, Elisabeth, Duchess of Rochlitz. Her mother, Anna von der Sale, an ambitious lady of the lower nobility, had informed the Landgrave that she must stipulate for certain privileges. As soon as Philip had received the replies from Wittenberg and Weimar, on Dec. 23, 1539, the demands of the mother were at once settled by persons vested with the necessary authority. Even before this, on the very day of the negotiations with Luther, Dec. 11, the Landgrave and his wife Christina had each drawn up a formal deed concerning what was about to take place: Christina agreed to Philip's "taking another wedded wife" and promised that she would never on that account be unfriendly to the Landgrave, his second wife, or her children; Philip pledged himself not to countenance any claim to the Landgraviate on the part of any issue by the second wife during the lifetime of Christina's two sons, but to provide for such issue by means of territories situated outside his own dominions.[2] Such was the assurance with which he proceeded towards the cherished goal.

Several Hessian theologians of the new faith, for instance, the preacher Dionysius Melander, a personal friend of the Landgrave's, and Johann Lening were on his side.[3] To the

[1] "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 308. Cp. Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 30.
[2] Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 31. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

memorandum composed by Luther and Melanchthon the signatures of both the above-mentioned were subsequently added, as well as those of Anton Corvinus, then pastor at Witzenhausen, of Adam Fuldensis (Kraft), then Superintendent at Marburg, of Justus Winther—since 1532 Court Schoolmaster at Cassel and, from 1542, Superintendent at Rotenburg on the Fulda—and of Balthasar Rhaide (Raid), pastor at Hersfeld, who, as Imperial Notary, certified the marriage. The signature of the last was, however, subsequently erased.[1]

About the middle of Jan., 1540, Philip informed the more prominent Councillors and theologians that he would soon carry out his project. When everything was ready the marriage was celebrated on March 4 in the Castle of Rotenburg on the Fulda by the Court Chaplain, Dionysius Melander, in the presence of Bucer and Melanchthon; were also present the Commandant of the Wartburg, Eberhard von der Thann, representing the Elector of Saxony, Pastor Balthasar Rhaide, the Hessian Chancellor Johann Feige of Lichtenau, the Marshal Hermann von Hundelshausen, Rudolf Schenk zu Schweinsberg (Landvogt of Eschwege on the Werra), Hermann von der Malsburg, a nobleman, and the mother of the bride, Anna von der Sale.[2] The draft of the short discourse still exists with which the Landgrave intended to open the ceremony. Melander delivered the formal wedding address. On the following day Melanchthon handed the Landgrave an "admonition," i.e. a sort of petition, in which he warmly recommended to his care the welfare of education. It is possible that when summoned, to Rotenburg from a meeting of the Schmalkalden League at which he had been assisting, he was unaware of the object of the invitation. Subsequent explanations, furnished at the last moment, by Melander and Lening, seem to have drawn a protest from Melanchthon which roused the anger of the two preachers. This shows that "everything did not pass off smoothly at Rotenburg."[3] Both were, not long after, stigmatised by Melanchthon as "*ineruditi homines*" and made chiefly responsible for the lax principles of the Landgrave.[4] Luther tried later to represent Lening, the

[1] "Luthers Briefwechsel," 12, pp. 326 and 328.
[2] Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 43. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 41 f.
[4] Melanchthon to Camerarius, Sep. 1, 1540, first fully published by Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 194.

" monster," as the man by whom the idea of the bigamy, a source of extreme embarrassment to the Wittenbergers, had first been hatched.[1]

Although the Landgrave was careful to preserve secrecy concerning the new marriage—already known to so many persons,—permitting only the initiate to visit the " lady," and even forbidding her to attend Divine Worship, still the news of what had taken place soon leaked out. " Palpable signs appeared in the building operations commenced at Weissenstein, and also in the despatch of a cask of wine to Luther."[2] At Weissenstein, in the former monastery near Cassel, now Wilhelmshöhe, an imposing residence was fitted up for Margaret von der Sale. In a letter of May 24, 1540, to Philip, Luther expresses his thanks for the gift of wine : " I have received your Serene Highness's present of the cask of Rhine wine and thank your Serene Highness most humbly. May our dear Lord God keep and preserve you body and soul. Amen."[3] Katey also received a gift from the Prince, for which Luther returned thanks on Aug. 22, though without mentioning its nature.[4] On the cask of wine and its destination the Schultheiss of Lohra spoke " openly before all the peasants," so Anton Corvinus informed the Landgrave on May 25, saying that : " Your Serene Highness has taken another wife, of which he was perfectly sure, and your Serene Highness is now sending a cask of wine to Luther because he gave your Serene Highness permission to do such a thing."[5]

On June 9 Jonas wrote from Wittenberg, where he was staying with Luther—who himself was as silent as the tomb—to George of Anhalt : Both in the Meissen district and at Wittenberg there is " much gossip " (' *ingens fama* ') of bigamy with a certain von Sale, though, probably, it was only " question of a concubine."[6]

[1] To Justus Menius, Jan. 10, 1542, " Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 426. To Chancellor Brück, soon after Jan. 10, 1542, *ibid.*, 4, p. 296. Melanchthon wrote to Veit Dietrich on Dec. 11, 1541, concerning Lening : " *Monstroso corpore et animo est.*"

[2] Thus Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 48 f.

[3] " Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 362 f. Rockwell's statement, p. 45, that Luther had been offered 200 Gulden by the Landgrave as a present, but had refused the gift, is, in both instances, founded on a misunderstanding. Cp. N. Paulus, " Hist. Jahrb.," 1905, p. 405.

[4] Luther to the Landgrave, Aug. 22, 1540, " Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 389.

[5] " Briefwechsel des Corvinus," (see p. 14, n. 2), p. 79. Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 563.

[6] " Briefwechsel des Jonas," ed. G. Kawerau, 1, p. 394.

Five days later, however, he relates, that "at Würzburg and similar [Catholic] localities the Papists and Canons were expressing huge delight" over the bigamy.[1]

The behaviour of the Landgrave's sister had helped to spread the news. On March 13 the Landgrave, through Marshal von Hundelshausen, had informed the latter of the fact, as he had formally promised Margaret's mother to do. The "lady began to weep, made a great outcry and abused Luther and Bucer as a pair of incarnate scamps."[2] She was unable to reconcile herself to the bigamy or to refrain from complaining to others. "My angry sister has been unable to hold her tongue," wrote the Landgrave Philip on June 8.[3] The Ducal Court of Saxony at Dresden was anxious for reliable information. Duke Henry was a patron of Lutheranism, but one of the motives for his curiosity in this matter is to be found in the fact that the Landgrave was claiming a portion of the inheritance of the late Duke George, who had died on April 17, 1539. In accordance with Henry's orders Anna von der Sale, as a subject of the Saxon duchy, was removed by force on June 3 from her residence at Schönfeld and carried to Dresden. There the mother confessed everything and declared, not without pride, that her daughter Margaret "was as much the rightful wife of the Landgrave as Christina."[4] About Whitsun the Landgrave personally admitted the fact to Maurice of Saxony.

The Court of Dresden at once informed the Elector of Saxony of its discovery and of the very unfavourable manner in which the news had been received, and the latter, in turn, communicated it, through Chancellor Brück, to Luther and Melanchthon.

The Elector Johann Frederick, in view of the change of circumstances, became more and more vexed with the marriage. To a certain extent he stood under the influence of Elisabeth Duchess of Rochlitz. In his case, too, the question of property played a part, viz. whether, in view of the understanding existing between Hesse and Saxony as to the succession, the children of the second wife were to become the heirs in the event of the death of the children of the first wife, this being what the Landgrave demanded. Above all, however, the cautious Elector was anxious about the attitude of the Empire and Emperor. He feared lest steps should be taken against the general scandal which had been given and to obviate the danger of the spread of polygamous ideas. Hence he was not far from withdrawing from Luther the favour he had hitherto shown him, the more so now that the Court of Dresden was intent on raising trouble against all who had furthered the Landgrave's plan.

Meanwhile the news rapidly spread, partly owing to persons belonging to the Court. It reached King Ferdinand, and, by him,

[1] "Briefwechsel des Jonas," ed. G. Kawerau, p. 397.

[2] Account of the Marshal in "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 335.

[3] To Anthony von Schönberg, in Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 51, according to information taken from the archives.

[4] Rockwell, *loc. cit.*, p. 53.

and still more by Morone, the Nuncio, it was carried to the Emperor.

Morone wrote on June 15, from the religious conference then proceeding at Hagenau, to Cardinal Farnese at Rome: "During the lifetime of his first wife, a daughter of Duke George of Saxony of good memory, the Landgrave of Hesse, has, as we hear, taken a second wife, a lady of distinction, von der Sale by name, a native of Saxony. It is said, his theologians teach that it is not forbidden to Christians to have several wives, except in the case of a Bishop, because there is no such prohibition in Holy Scripture. I can hardly credit it, but since God has 'given them over to a reprobate mind' [Rom. i. 28] and as the King has assured me that he has heard it from several quarters, I give you the report for what it is worth."[1]

Philip of Hesse, who was already in disgrace with the Emperor on account of his expedition into Würtemberg and his support of Duke Ulrich, knew the penalties which he might expect unless he found some means of escape. The "*Carolina*" (1532) decreed "capital punishment" against bigamists, no less than against adulterers.[2] The Landgrave himself was even fully prepared to forfeit one-third of his possessions should it be impossible to arrive otherwise at a settlement.[3] He now openly declared—as he had already hinted he would—that, in case of necessity, he would make humble submission to the Emperor; if the worst came to the worst, then he would also make public the memorandum he had received from Wittenberg in order to exculpate himself—a threat which filled the Elector with alarm on account of his University and of Luther.

Bucer, the first to be summoned to the aid of the Hessian Court, advised the Landgrave to escape from his unfortunate predicament by downright lying. He wrote: If concealment and equivocation should prove of no avail, he was to state in writing that false rumours concerning his person had come into circulation, and that no Christian was allowed to have two wives at the same time; he was also to replace the marriage-contract by another contract in

[1] Rockwell, *loc. cit.*, p. 60.

[2] "*Carolina*," ed. Köhler, 1900, p. 63. Cp. the Imperial Law "*Neminem*" in "*Corp. iur. civ., Cod. Iustin.*," ed. Krüger, 1877, p. 198. Bucer pointed out to the Landgrave, that "according to the common law of the Empire such things were punished by death." "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 177; cp. pp. 178, 180.

[3] He declared on Jan. 3, 1541: "This much and not more the law may take from us."

which Margaret might be described as a concubine—such as God had allowed to His beloved friends—and not as a wife within the meaning of the calamitous Imperial Law; an effort was also to be made to induce the Court of Dresden to keep silence, or to deny any knowledge of the business, and, in the meantime, the "lady" might be kept even more carefully secluded than before.[1]

The Landgrave's reply was violent in the extreme. He indignantly rejected Bucer's suggestion; the dissimulation alleged to have been practised by others, notably by the Patriarchs, Judges, Kings and Prophets, etc., in no wise proved the lawfulness of lying; Bucer had "been instigated to make such proposals by some worldly-wise persons and jurists whom we know well."[2] Philip wrote to the same effect to the Lutheran theologians, Schnepf, Osiander and Brenz, who urged him to deny that Margaret was his lawful wife: "That, when once the matter has become quite public, we should assert that it was invalid, this we cannot bring ourselves to do. We cannot tell a lie, for to lie does not become any man. And, moreover, God has forbidden lying. So long as it is possible we shall certainly reply '*dubitative*' or '*per amphibologiam*,' but to say that it is invalid, such advice you may give to another, but not to us."[3]

The "*amphibologia*" had been advised by the Hessian theologians, who had pointed out that Margaret could best be described to the Imperial Court of Justice as a "*concubina*," since, in the language of the Old Testament, as also in that of the ancient Church, this word had sometimes been employed to describe a lawful wife.[4] They also wrote to Luther and Melanchthon, fearing that they might desert the Landgrave, telling them that they were expected to stand by their memorandum. Although they were in favour of secrecy, yet they wished that, in case of necessity, the Wittenbergers should publicly admit their share. Good care would be taken to guard against the general introduction of polygamy.[5]

[1] On July 8, 1540, *ibid.*, p. 178 ff. Before this, on June 15, he had exhorted the Landgrave to hush up the matter as far as possible so that the whole Church may not be "defiled" by it. *Ibid.*, p. 174, Paulus, *loc. cit.*, p. 507. [2] "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 185 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 183. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 341.
[5] "*Analecta Lutherana*," ed. Kolde, p. 353 *seq.* Cp. Rockwell, *loc. cit.*, p. 71, n. 1.

Dispensation; Advice in Confession; a Confessor's Secret?

Was the document signed by Luther, Melanchthon and Bucer a dispensation for bigamy?

It has been so described. But, even according to the very wording of the memorandum, the signatories had no intention of issuing a dispensation. On the contrary, according to the text, they, as learned theologians, declared that the Divine Law, as they understood it, gave a general sanction, according to which, in cases such as that of Philip of Hesse, polygamy was allowed. It is true that they and Philip himself repeatedly use the word "dispensation," but by this they meant to describe the alleged general sanction in accordance with which the law admitted of exceptions in certain cases, hence their preference for the term "to use" the dispensation, instead of the more usual "to beg" or "to grant." Philip is firmly resolved "to use" the dispensation brought to his knowledge by Luther's writings, and the theologians, taking their cue from him, likewise speak of his "using" it in his own case.[1]

It was the same with the "dispensation" which the Wittenbergers proposed to Henry VIII of England. (See above, p. 4 f.) They had no wish to invest him with an authority which, according to their ideas, he did not possess, but they simply drew his attention to the freedom common to all, and declared by them to be bestowed by God, viz. in his case, of taking a second wife, telling him that he was free to have recourse to this dispensation. In other words, they gave him the power to dispense himself, regardless of ecclesiastical laws and authorities.

Another question: How far was the substance of the advice given in the Hessian case to be regarded as a secret? Can it really be spoken of as a "counsel given in confession," or as a "secret of the confessional"?

This question later became of importance in the negotiations which turned upon the memorandum. In order to answer it without prejudice it is essential in the first place to point out, that the subsequent interpretations and evasions must not here be taken into account. The actual

[1] E. Friedberg remarks in the "Deutsche Zeitschr. f. KR.," 36, 1904, p. 441, that the Wittenbergers "did not even possess any power of dispensing."

wording of the document and its attendant historical circumstances have alone to be taken into consideration, abstraction being made of the fine distinctions and meanings afterwards read into it.

First, there is no doubt that both the Landgrave's request for the Wittenberg testimony and its granting were intended to be confidential and not public. Philip naturally assumed that the most punctilious secrecy would be preserved so long as no decision had been arrived at, seeing that he had made confidential disclosures concerning his immorality in pleading for a second marriage. The Wittenbergers, as they explicitly state, gave their reply not merely unwillingly, with repugnance and with great apprehension of the scandal which might ensue, but also most urgently recommended Philip to keep the bigamy to himself. Both the request and the theological testimony accordingly came under the natural obligation of silence, i.e. under the so-called confidential seal of secrecy. This, however, was of course broken when the suppliant on his part allowed the matter to become public ; in such a case no one could grudge the theologians the natural right of bringing forward everything that was required for their justification, even to the reasons which had determined them to give their consent, though of course they were in honour bound to show the utmost consideration ; for this the petitioner himself was alone to blame.

As a matter of fact, however, strange though it may seem, Philip's intention all along had been ultimately to make the marriage public. It cannot be proved that he ever made any written promise to observe the recommendation of absolute secrecy made by the theologians. Those who drew up the memorandum disregarded his wish for publicity, and, on the contrary, " advised " that the matter should be kept a dead secret. Yet ought they not to have foreseen that a Prince so notoriously unscrupulous would be likely to disregard their " advice " ? The theologians were certainly no men of the world if they really believed that the Landgrave's bigamy—and their memorandum by which it was justified—would or could remain concealed. They themselves had allowed a number of other parties to be initiated into the secret, nor was it difficult to foresee that Philip, and Margaret's ambitious mother, would not allow

the stigma of concubinage to rest permanently on the newly wedded bride. The mother had expressly stipulated that Margaret should be treated as a lawful wife and given this title, and not as a concubine, though of this the Wittenbergers were not aware.

Further, the theological grounds for the Wittenberg "advice" must not be lost sight of in considering the question of the obligation of silence or secrecy. The theologians based their decision on a doctrine which they had already openly proclaimed. Nor did Luther ever withdraw from the standpoint that polygamy was lawful; he even proclaimed it during the height of the controversy raised by the Hessian bigamy, though he was careful to restrict it to very rare and exceptional cases and to make its use dependent on the consent of the authorities. Thus the grounds for the step he had taken in Philip's favour were universally and publicly known just as much as his other theological doctrines. If, however, his teaching on this matter was true, then, strictly speaking, people had as much right to it as to every other piece of truth; in fact, it was the more urgent that this Evangelical discovery should not be put under a bushel, seeing that it would have been a veritable godsend to many who groaned in the bonds of matrimony. Hence everything, both on Philip's side and on that of the theologians, pointed to publicity. But may, perhaps, the Wittenberg "advice" have been esteemed a sort of "counsel given in Confession," and did its contents accordingly fall under the "secret of Confession"?

The word "Confession," in its sacramental meaning, was never used in connection with the affair dealt with at Wittenberg, either in Philip's instructions to Bucer or in the theologians' memorandum, nor does it occur in any of the few documents relating to the bigamy until about six months later. "Confession" is first alleged in the letter of excuse given below which Luther addressed to the Elector of Saxony. It is true that the expression "in the way of Confession" occurs once in the memorandum, but there it is used in an entirely different sense and in no way stamps the business as a matter of Confession. There it is stated (above, p. 21), that those who were to be apprised of the bigamy were to learn it "in the way of Confession."

Here the word Confession is employed by metonymy and merely emphasises the need of discretion. Here there was naturally no idea of the sacramental seal, or of the making of a real Confession. In the Middle Ages the term Confession was not seldom used to denote the imparting of an ordinary confidential secret, just as the word to confess originally meant to admit, to acknowledge, or to communicate something secret. This, however, was not the meaning attached to it by those who sought to shelter themselves behind the term in the controversies which ensued after the bigamy had become generally known. To vindicate the keeping secret of his so-called "advice in Confession," Luther falls back upon his Catholic recollections of the entire secrecy required of the Confessor, in other words, on the sacramental "seal."

Undoubtedly the Seal of Confession is inexorable; according to the Catholic view it possesses a sacramental sanction and surrounds, like a protecting rampart, the sanctuary of the Sacrament of Penance, which otherwise would be shunned by all. But this absolute and sacramental obligation of silence attends only the administration of the Sacrament of Penance.

The idea that Luther and his comrades when signing the "advice" were dispensing the Sacrament of Penance cannot but raise a smile. In connection with this matter non-Catholic theologians and historians would never have spoken as they have done of Luther as a Confessor, had they been better acquainted with the usages of the older Church. In the case of such writers all that is known of the system of Confession is often a few distorted quotations from casuists. Even under its altered form, as then in use among the Protestants, Confession could only mean an admission of one's sins, made to obtain absolution. In Lutheranism, confession, so far as it was retained at all, meant the awakening and animating of faith by means of some sort of self-accusation completed by the assurance given by the preacher of the Divine promise and forgiveness, a process which bears no analogy to the "testimony" given by the theologians to Philip of Hesse. In the Catholic Church, moreover, in whose practice Luther seems anxious to take refuge, Confession involves an accusation of all grievous sins, contrition, a firm resolve to amend, satisfaction and absolution. What

was there of all this in the Landgrave's so-called Confession ?[1] Where was the authority to absolve, even had this been what the Landgrave sought ? How then could there come into play the Seal of Confession, i.e. any sacramental obligation apart from the purely natural obligation of keeping silence concerning a communication made in confidence ? Again, Confession, even according to Lutheran ideas, is not made at a distance, or to several persons simultaneously, or with the object of securing a signed document.

Apart from all this one may even question whether the Landgrave's disclosures were really honestly meant. Not everyone would have taken them from the outset as intended seriously, or have regarded them as above suspicion. Melanchthon, for instance, soon began to have doubts. (See below.) The readiness, nay, eagerness, shown by Philip later to repeat his Confession to others, to reinforce it by even more appalling admissions of wickedness, and to give it the fullest publicity, is really not favourable to the " Confession " idea ; on the contrary, it reminds us of the morbid pleasure which persons habituated to vice and who have lost all respect whether for themselves or for the virtue of others, take in speaking openly of their moral lapses. The most important point to bear in mind is, however, the fact, that with Philip of Hesse it was a question of a marriage which he intended should be kept secret only for a time, and further that the Wittenbergers were aware of Philip's readiness to lay his case before the Emperor, nay, even the Pope should necessity arise.[2] Owing to this they could not be blind to the possibility of the marriage, and, incidentally, of the Landgrave's admission of moral necessity, and further of their own " advice " being all disclosed. Thus the " Seal of Confession " was threatened from the very first. Philip himself never recognised a binding obligation of secrecy on the part of the Wittenbergers ; on the contrary, his invitation to them was : Speak out freely, now that the step has been taken with your sanction ! What was Luther's answer ? He appealed to the Secret of the Confessional and refused to defend the act before

[1] Cp. N. Paulus, " Das Beichtgeheimnis und die Doppelehe Philipps usw.," " Hist.-pol. Bl.," 135, 1905, p. 317 ff.
[2] Cp. Rockwell, *loc. cit.*, pp. 154, 156.

the world and the Empire, but merely " before God " ; all he was willing to do was to vindicate it " before God, by examples such as that of Abraham, etc., and to conceal it as much as possible." And yet, to forestall what will be related below, full publicity would surely have been the best thing for himself, as then the world would at least have learnt that he was not desirous of introducing polygamy generally, and that the whole business had only been made common property through Philip's disregard of the recommendation of secrecy. Instead of this, however, he preferred to profess his readiness (it was probably no more than a threat) to admit publicly that he had been in the wrong all along and had acted foolishly ; here again, had he been true to his word, the " Secret of the Confessional " would assuredly have fared badly.

Even in his letter of excuse to the Elector Johann Frederick concerning his sanction of the bigamy, Luther explained so much of the incident, that the " Seal of Confession " was practically violated ; quite unmindful of the inviolability of the Seal he here declared, that he would have preferred to say nothing of the " counsel given in Confession had not necessity " forced him to do so. But what kind of Seal of Confession was this, we may ask, which could thus be set aside in case of necessity ?

Melanchthon acted differently. He, without any necessity, at once recounted everything that had happened to a friend in a letter eloquent with grief. He, the author of the " Counsel of Confession," felt under no obligation to regard the Seal. He considers himself liberated, by Philip's behaviour, from the obligation even of confidential secrecy.[1] Bucer expressed himself on Aug. 8, 1540, in a similar fashion concerning the counsel given to the Landgrave " in Confession " : Luther would certainly publish and defend it, should the " marriage have to be admitted " through no fault of the Landgrave's.[2] No one, in fact, displayed the slightest scruple regarding the secrecy of the Confession—except Luther and those who re-echo his sentiments.

[1] Yet in a later missive to Philip of Hesse (Sep. 17, 1540) he too speaks of the " counsel given in Confession in case of necessity." Here, however, he bases his injunction of silence on other considerations.

[2] " Philipps Briefwechsel," I, p. 208.

According to the above we are justified in saying that the term "Counsel given in Confession" is in no wise descriptive of the Wittenberg document. The word "testimony," or "certificate," used both in Philip's instructions and in an important passage of the document signed by Luther, Melanchthon and Bucer, is historically more correct; the terms "opinion" or "memorandum" are equally applicable.

The Wittenbergers gave their testimony or opinion—such is the upshot of the matter—but no Dispensation or Counsel in Confession in the sense just determined. They gave a testimony, which was asked for that it might be made public, but which was given in confidence, which was moreover based on their openly expressed teaching, though it actually dealt only with Philip's own case, a testimony which no longer involved them in any obligation of secrecy once the marriage had been made public by Philip, and once the latter had declared his intention of making the testimony public should circumstances demand it.

Luther's Embarrassment on the Bigamy becoming Public.

At the commencement of June, 1540, Luther was in great distress on account of the Hessian bigamy. His embarrassment and excitement increased as the tidings flew far and wide, particularly when the Court of Dresden and his own Elector began to take fright at the scandal, and the danger of complications arising with the Emperor. On the other hand, Luther was not unaware of the Landgrave's doubts as to whether he would stand by his written declaration. Jonas wrote from Wittenberg on June 10 to George of Anhalt: "Philip is much upset and Dr. Martin full of thought."[1]

On that very day Brück, the Electoral Chancellor, discussed the matter with both of them at Wittenberg. He acquainted them with his sovereign's fears. They had gone too far, and the publication of the affair had had the most disastrous results; a young Princess and Landgravine had appeared on the scene, which was not at all what the Elector had expected; the Court of Dresden was loud in its complaints and spared not even the Elector; the Dresden

[1] "Briefwechsel des Jonas," 1, p. 394.

people were bringing forward against Luther what he had taught in favour of polygamy thirteen years before; the door had now been opened wide to polygamists.

Not long after Luther wrote, that, were it necessary, he would know how to "extricate himself."[1] Even before dropping this curious remark he had shown himself very anxious to make his position secure. It was with this object in view, that, after his interview with Brück, probably on the same day, he proceeded to explain the case to his sovereign in the lengthy letter[2] in which he appeals to Confession and its secrecy.

"Before the world and against the laws of the Empire it cannot be defended," but "we were desirous of glossing it over before God as much as possible with examples, such as that of Abraham, etc. All this was done and treated of as in Confession, so that we cannot be charged as though we had done it willingly and gladly, or with joy and pleasure. . . . I took into consideration the unavoidable necessity and weakness, and the danger to his conscience which Master Bucer had set forth."

Luther goes on to complain, that the Landgrave, by allowing this "matter of Confession" and "advice given in Confession" to become to a certain extent public, had caused all this "annoyance and contumely." He relates in detail what Bucer, when seeking to obtain the Wittenberg sanction, had recounted concerning his master's immorality, so contrary to the Evangel, "though he should be one of the mainstays of the party." They had at first looked askance at the idea, but, on being told that "he was unable to relinquish it, and, should we not permit it, would do it in spite of us, and obtain permission from the Emperor or the Pope unless we were beforehand, we humbly begged His Serene Highness, if he was really set on it, and, as he declared, could not in conscience and before God do otherwise, that he would at least keep it secret." This had been promised them [by Bucer]; their intention had been to "save his conscience as best we might."

Luther, far from showing himself remorseful for his indulgence, endeavours in his usual way to suppress any scruples of conscience: "Even to-day, were such a case to come before me again, I should not know how to give any other advice than what I then gave, nor would it trouble me should it afterwards become known." "I am not ashamed of the testimony even

[1] "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 79.

[2] Ed. by Seidemann, "Lauterbachs Tagebuch," p. 196 ff., with the notice, "Written in April or June, 1540." Rockwell gives the date more correctly, as, probably, June 10 (pp. 138, 364).

should it come before the world, though, to be spared trouble, I should prefer it to be kept secret so long as possible." Still, no angel would have induced him to give such advice "had he known that the Landgrave had long satisfied and could still satisfy his cravings on others, for instance, as I now learn, on lady von Essweg." This lady was perhaps a relative of Rudolf Schenk, Landvogt of Eschwege on the Werra.[1] We may recall, that the proposal of taking a "concubine" in place of the too numerous "light women" had been made to Philip by his sister.[2]

Luther goes on to excuse his conduct still further to the Elector: "Still less would I have advised a public marriage"; that the second wife was to become a Princess or Landgravine—a plan at which the whole Empire would take offence—had been kept from him altogether; "what I expected was, that, since he was obliged owing to the weakness of the flesh to follow the ordinary course of sin and shame, he would perhaps keep an honest girl in some house, and wed her secretly—though even this would look ill in the sight of the world—and thus overcome his great trouble of conscience; he could then ride backwards and forwards, as the great lords do frequently enough; similar advice I gave also to certain parish priests under Duke George and the bishops, viz. that they should marry their cook secretly."

Though what he here says may be worthy of credence, yet to apply the term Confession to what passed between Philip and Wittenberg is surely to introduce an alien element into the affair. Yet he does use the word three times in the course of the letter and seemingly lays great stress on it. The Confession, he says, covered all that had passed, and, because it "was seemly" to "keep matters treated of in Confession private" he and Melanchthon "preferred not to relate the matter and the counsel

[1] Cp. "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 82, n. 4, the remark of G. Kawerau. "The regret felt by Luther was caused by the knowledge that the Landgrave had already a 'concubine of his own' and had not been satisfying his lusts merely on 'common prostitutes'; had he known this at the time he gave his advice he would certainly have counselled the Landgrave to contract a sort of spiritual marriage with this concubine." Köstlin had seen a difficulty in Luther's later statement, that he would not have given his counsel (the advice tendered did not specify the lady) had he known that the Landgrave had "long satisfied, and could still satisfy, his craving on others," etc. That there is really a difficulty involved, at least in Luther's use of the plural "others," seems clear unless, indeed, Kawerau would make Luther counsel the Landgrave to contract "spiritual marriage" with all these several ladies. Elsewhere Luther describes as a "harlot" a certain Catharine whom Kawerau (*ibid.*) surmises to have been this same Essweg. By her Philip had a daughter named Ursula whom, in 1556, he gave in marriage to Claus Ferber.

[2] "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 160. The Landgrave to Bucer. He was to tell his sister "that she must surely recollect having told him that he should keep a concubine instead of having recourse to numerous prostitutes; if she was willing to allow what was contrary to God's law, why not allow this, which is a dispensation of God?"

given in Confession " to the Elector ; but, since the Landgrave " had revealed the substance of the Confession and the advice," it was easier for him to speak. Hence he would now reveal the " advice given in Confession ; though I should much have preferred to keep it secret, unless necessity had forced it from me, now I am unable to do so." The fact is, however, that the real Seal of Confession (and of this Luther was quite aware) does not allow the confessor who has received the Confession to make any communication or disclosure concerning it ; even should the penitent make statements concerning other matters which occurred in the Confession, under no circumstances whatsoever, however serious these may be, not even in the case of danger to life and limb, may " necessity " " force out " anything. Although in this case Luther had not heard a Confession at all, yet he refers to the Secret of the Confessional with which he was acquainted from his Catholic days, and his own former exercise of it : " I have received in Confession many confidences, both in Popery and since, and given advice, but were there any question of making them public I should be obliged to say no. . . . Such matters are no business of the secular courts nor ought they to be made public."

This uncalled-for introduction of Confession was intended to save him from being obliged to admit his consent publicly ; it was meant to reassure so weak a theologian as the Elector, who dreaded the scandal arising from Luther's advice to commit bigamy, and the discussion of the case before the Imperial Court of Justice ; possibly he also hoped it would serve against that other princely theologian, viz. the Landgrave, and cause him to withdraw his demand for a public acknowledgment of the sanction given. His tactics here remind us of Luther's later denial, when he professed himself ready simply to deny the bigamy and his share in it—because everything had been merely a matter of Confession.

Even in this first letter dealing with the question, he is clearly on the look-out for a loophole by which he may escape from the calamitous business.

The publication of the " testimony " was to be prevented at all costs. But, as a matter of fact, not only did the " Seal of Confession " present no obstacle, but even the common secrecy referred to above (p. 31) was no longer binding. This had been cancelled by the indiscretion of the Landgrave. Moreover, apart from this, the natural obligation of secrecy did not extend to certain extreme cases which might have been foreseen by both parties and in the

event of which both would recover their freedom. It should be noted, that Luther hardly made any appeal to this natural obligation of secrecy, probably because it could not be turned to account so easily. The Seal of Confession promised to serve him better in circles so little acquainted with theology.

In the second letter dealing with the bigamy, dated June 27, 1540, and addressed to Philip's intimate, Eberhard von der Thann, Luther speaks with an eye on Hesse.[1] Thann, through Chancellor Brück, had informed him of what was being said of him there, and had asked what Luther would advise the Hessian Prince, and whether, in order to obviate other cases of polygamy in Hesse, it would be advisable for the authorities to issue an edict against the universal lawfulness of having several wives. Luther replied, that he agreed with the Landgrave's intention as announced by Thann concerning his second marriage, viz. to wait until the Emperor "should approach His Serene Highness on the subject"; and then to write to the Emperor: "That he had taken a concubine but that he would be perfectly ready to put her away again if other Princes and Lords would set a good example." If the Emperor were compelled "to regard the 'lady' as a concubine," "no one else would dare to speak or think differently"; in this wise the real state of things would be "covered over and kept secret." On the other hand, it would not be at all advisable to issue any edict, or to speak of the matter," for then "there would be no end or limit to gossip and suspicions."

"And I for my part am determined [here he comes to his 'testimony' and the meaning he now put on it] to keep silence concerning my part of the confession which I heard from His Serene Highness through Bucer, even should I suffer for it, for it is better that people should say that Dr. Martin acted foolishly in his concession to the Landgrave—for even great men have acted foolishly and do so, even now, as the saying goes: A wise man makes no small mistakes—rather than reveal the reasons why we secretly consented; for that would greatly disgrace and damage the reputation of the Landgrave, and would also make matters worse." To the Elector his sovereign Luther had said that, even to-day, he "would not be able to give any different

[1] "Luthers Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 267 f., and, better, in Rockwell, p. 165, after the original.

advice" and that he saw no reason to blush for it. Hence it is hard to believe that he seriously contemplated admitting that he had been guilty of an act of "folly" and had "acted foolishly." It will be shown more clearly below what his object was in threatening such a repudiation of his advice to the Landgrave.

In his letter to Thann, Luther decides in favour of the expedient suggested by the Hessian theologians, viz. of the amphibological use of the word concubine; here it should, however, be noted, that this term, if used officially to counteract the common report concerning the new marriage, plainly implied a denial of the reality of the bigamy.

But how if the Landgrave were directly confronted in a Court of Justice with the question: Have you, or have you not, married two wives?

Here belongs the third letter of Luther's which we have on the subject and which was despatched to Hesse before the middle of July. It is addressed to "a Hessian Councillor" who has been identified, with some probability, as the Hessian Chancellor Johann Feige.[1]

To the addressee, who was acquainted with the whole matter and had applied to Luther for his opinion on behalf of the Landgrave, the writer defines his own position still more clearly; if people say openly that the Landgrave has contracted a second marriage, all one need answer is, that this is not true, although it is true that he has contracted a secret union; hence he himself was wont to say, "the Landgrave's other marriage is all nonsense."

The justification of this he finds in the theory of the secrecy of confession upon which he insists strongly in this letter. Not only is his own share in the matter *nil* because ostensibly done in confession, but the marriage itself is merely a sort of "confession marriage," a thing concealed and therefore non-existent so far as the world is concerned. "A secret affirmative cannot become a public affirmative . . . a secret 'yes' remains a public 'no' and vice versa. . . . On this I take my stand; I say that the Landgrave's second marriage is *nil* and cannot be convincing to anyone. For, as they say, '*palam*,' it is not true, and although it may be true '*clam*,' yet that they may not tell."

He is very bitter about the Landgrave's purpose of making the marriage and the Wittenberg "advice" public, should need arise. The fate of the latter was, in fact, his chief anxiety. "In this the Landgrave touches us too nearly, but himself even more, that he is determined to do '*palam*' what we arranged with him '*clam*,' and to make of a '*nullum*' an '*omne*'; this we are

[1] "Briefe," 6, p. 263 *seq.* For the address see Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 166, where the date is fixed between July 7 and 15, 1540.

unable either to defend or to answer for, and we should certainly come to high words." The last sentence was, however, felt by Luther to be too strong and he accordingly struck it out of the letter.

He also says that the Landgrave's appeal to his sermon on Genesis would be of no avail, because he (Luther) had taught, both previous to and after it, that the law of Moses was not to be introduced, though some of it "might be used secretly in cases of necessity, or even publicly by order of the authorities." But advice extorted from him in Confession by the distress of a suffering conscience could "not be held to constitute a true precedent in law." He here touches upon a thought to which he was to return in entirely different circumstances: Neither the preachers, nor the Gospel, lay down outward laws, not even concerning religion; the secular authorities are the only legislators; ecclesiastical guidance comprises only advice, direction and the expounding of Scripture, and has to do only with the interior life, being without any jurisdiction, even spiritual; as public men, the pastors were appointed to preach, pray and give advice; to the individual they rendered service amidst the "secret needs of conscience."[1]

He thereby absolves himself from the consequence apparently involved in the step he had taken, viz. the introduction of polygamy as a "general right"; it does not follow that: "What you do from necessity, I have a right to do"; "necessity knows no law or precedent," hence a man who is driven by hunger to steal bread, or who kills in self-defence is not punished, yet what thus holds in cases of necessity cannot be taken as a law or rule. On the other hand, Luther will not listen to the proposal then being made in Hesse, viz. that, in order to counteract the bad example, a special edict should be issued declaring polygamy unlawful as a general rule, but allowable in an exceptional case, on the strength "of secret advice given in Confession"; on the contrary, it would be far better simply to denounce polygamy as unlawful.

Hence if the Landgrave, so Luther concludes, "will not forsake the sweetheart" on whom "he has so set his heart that she has become a need to him," and if, moreover, he will "keep her out of the way," then "we theologians and confessors shall vindicate it before God, as a case of necessity to be excused by the examples of Genesis. But defend it before the world and '*iure nunc regente*,' that we cannot and shall not do. Short of this the Landgrave may count upon our best service."

The Landgrave was, however, not satisfied with either of these letters, both of which came into his hands. He

[1] Cp. vol. iii., p. 30 ff.

wanted from Luther a clear and public admission of his share in the business, which, to the Prince's peril, had now become as good as public, and threatened to constitute a precedent. By this invitation the Prince naturally released Luther from all obligation of secrecy. Even the making public of the immorality, which had served as a pretext for the new marriage, he did not mind in the least, for his laxity in morals was already a matter of common knowledge ; he discussed his lapses with the theologians as openly as though all of them had been his confessors and spiritual directors ; he was also quite ready to repeat his admissions, " as in Confession," before secular witnesses. Such was the depth of depravity into which his passions had brought him.

Yielding to pressure brought to bear on him by Saxony, Luther had meanwhile conceived the idea of publishing a work against polygamy. The new expedient had indeed been foreshadowed in his last letter. On June 17, 1540, Jonas wrote to George of Anhalt that Luther might be expected to write a work " *Contra polygamiam.*"[1] Martin Beyer of Schaffhausen, on his return from Wittenberg, also brought the news, so Bullinger was informed, that " Luther was being compelled by the Hessian business to write a work against the plurality of wives."[2]

The project was, however, never realised, probably on account of the insuperable difficulties it involved.

But though this work never saw the light, history has preserved for us a number of Luther's familiar conversations, dating from this period and taken down directly from his lips, utterances which have every claim to consideration and faithfully mirror his thoughts.

Luther's Private Utterances Regarding the Bigamy.

The Table-Talk, dating from the height of the hubbub caused by the bigamy, affords us a vivid psychological picture of Luther.

Of this Table-Talk we have the detailed and authentic notes from the pen of Johann Mathesius, who was present. These notes, in their best form, became known only in 1903,

[1] " Briefwechsel des Jonas," 1, p. 397 f.

[2] Thus Gualther from Frankfort, Sep. 15, 1540, to Bullinger, in Fueslin, " *Epistolæ*," p. 205. Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 176.

thanks to Kroker's edition, but, for the better understanding of Luther's personality, his intimate descriptions of what was passing in his mind are of inestimable value. Conjointly with the principal passage, which probably dates from June 18, 1540, other sayings dropped regarding the same matter may be considered.[1]

The scene in the main was as follows: The usual guests, among them the disciples with their note-books, were assembled after the evening meal in Luther's house, grouped around the master, who seemed sunk in thought; Melanchthon, however, was missing, for he lay seriously ill at Weimar, overwhelmed by anxiety now that his consent to the bigamy was leaking out. Whilst yet at table two letters were handed to Luther, the first from Brück, the Electoral Chancellor, the second from the Elector himself. Both referred to Melanchthon. The Elector requested Luther to betake himself as soon as possible to Weimar to his friend, who seemed in danger of death, and informed him at the same time of the measures threatened by the Landgrave in the matter of the second marriage.

Luther, after glancing at Brück's missive concerning Melanchthon, said to the guests: "Philip is pining away for vexation, and has fallen into a fever ('*tertiana*'). But why does the good fellow crucify himself so about this business? All his anxiety will do no good. I do wish I were with him! I know how sensitive he is. The scandal pains him beyond measure. I, on the other hand, have a thick skin, I am a peasant, a hard Saxon when such × are concerned.[2] I expect I shall be summoned to Philip."

Someone thereupon interjected the remark: "Doctor, perhaps the Colloquium [which was to be held at Hagenau] will not now take place"; Luther replied: "They will certainly have to wait for us. . . ."

A second messenger now came in with the Elector's letter, conveying the expected summons to proceed to Weimar. On the reader the news it contained concerning the Landgrave fell like the blows of a sledge-hammer. After attentively perusing the letter "with an earnest mien," he said: "Philip the Landgrave is cracked; he is now asking the Emperor to let him keep both wives."

The allusion to the Landgrave's mental state is explained by a former statement of Luther's made in connection with some words uttered by the Landgrave's father: "The old Landgrave

[1] The chief passage will be found in Kroker (Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 156 f.) more correctly than in Loesche (Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 117 ff.). It is headed "*De Macedonico negotio*," because in Luther's circle Philip of Hesse was known as the "Macedonian." Where no other reference is given our quotations are taken from this passage.

[2] On the sign, see present work, vol. iii., p. 231.

[William II] used to say to his son Philip : 'If you take after your mother, then you won't come to much ; if you take after me, you will have nothing about you that I can praise ; if you take after both of us, then you will be a real demon.'" Luther had added : "I fear he is also mad, for it runs in the family."[1] "And Philip [Melanchthon] said : 'This [the bigamy] is the beginning of his insanity.'"[2]

When Luther re-entered, so the narrator continues, "he was as cheerful as could be, and he said to us : 'It is grand having something to do, for then we get ideas ; otherwise we do nothing but feed and swill. How our Papists will scream ! But let them howl to their own destruction. Our cause is a good one and no fault is to be found with our way of life, or rather [he corrects himself] with the life of those who take it seriously. If the Hessian Landgrave has sinned, then that is sin and a scandal. That we have frequently discounselled by good and holy advice ; they have seen our innocence and yet refuse to see it. Hence they [the Papists] are now forced to look the Hessian "*in anum*"[3] (i.e. are witnesses of his shame). But they will be brought to destruction by [our] scandals because they refuse to listen to the pure doctrine ; for God will not on this account forsake us or His Word, or spare them, even though we have our share of sin, for He has resolved to overthrow the Papacy. That has been decreed by God, as we read in Daniel, where it is foretold of him [Antichrist] who is even now at the door : "And none shall help him" (Dan. xi. 45). In former times no power was able to root out the Pope ; in our own day no one will be able to help him, because Antichrist is revealed.'"

Thus amidst the trouble looming he finds his chief consolation in his fanatical self-persuasion that the Papacy must fall and that he is the chosen instrument to bring this about, i.e. in his supposed mission to thwart Antichrist, a Divine mission which could not be contravened. Hence his pseudo-mysticism was once again made to serve his purpose.

"If scandals occur amongst us," he continues, "let us not forget that they existed in Christ's own circle. The Pharisees were doubtless in glee over our Lord Christ on account of the wickedness of Judas. In the same way the Landgrave has become a Judas to us. 'Ah, the new prophet has such followers [as Judas, cried the foes of Christ !] What good can come of Christ ?'—But because they refused to open their eyes to the miracles, they were forced to see '*Christum Crucifixum*' and . . . later to see and suffer under Titus. But our sins may obtain pardon and be easily remedied ; it is only necessary that

[1] Philip's father and his uncle William I (the elder brother) died insane. (See below, p. 61.)

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 143.

[3] On the Marcolfus legend (again to be mentioned on the next page), cp. vol. iii., p. 268, n. 4 ; F. H. von der Hagen, "Narrenbuch," Halle, 1811, p. 256 ff., and Rockwell, pp. 160 and 163, where other instances are given of Luther's use of the same figure.

the Emperor should forbid [the bigamy], or that our Princes should intercede [for the Hessian], which they are at liberty to do, or that he should repudiate the step he took."

"David also fell, and surely there were greater scandals under Moses in the wilderness. Moses caused his own masters to be slain. . . . But God had determined to drive out the heathen, hence the scandals amongst the Jews availed not to prevent it. Thus, too, our sins are pardonable, but not those of the Papists; for they are contemners of God, crucify Christ and, though they know better, defend their blasphemies."

"What advantage do they expect of it," he goes on to ask in an ironical vein; "they put men to death, but we work for life and take many wives." This he said, according to the notes, "with a joyful countenance and amidst loud laughter."[1] "God has resolved to vex the people, and, when my turn comes, I will give them hard words and tell them to look Marcolfus '*in anum*' since they refuse to look him in the face." He then went on: "I don't see why I should trouble myself about the matter. I shall commend it to our God. Should the Macedonian [the Landgrave] desert us, Christ will stand by us, the blessed Schevlimini [שֵׁב לִימִינִי: Sit at my right hand (Ps. cix. 1)]. He has surely brought us out of even tighter places. The restitution of Würtemberg puts this scandal into the shade, and the Sacramentarians and the revolt [of the Peasants]; and yet God delivered us out of all that." What he means to say is: Even greater scandal was given by Philip of Hesse when he imposed on Würtemberg the Protestant Duke Ulrich, heedless of the rights of King Ferdinand and of the opposition of the Emperor and the Church;[2] in the same way the ever-recurring dissensions on the Sacrament were an even greater scandal, and so was the late Peasant War which threatened worse things to the Evangelical cause than the Hessian affair.

"Should the Landgrave fall away from us."—This fear lest Philip should desert their party Luther had expressed in some rather earlier utterances in 1540, when he had described more particularly the Landgrave's character and attitude. "A strange man!" he says of him. "He was born under a star. He is bent upon having his own way, and so fancies he will obtain the approval of Emperor and Pope. It may be that he will fall away from us on account of this affair. . . . He is a real Hessian; he cannot be still nor does he know how to yield. When once this business is over he will be hatching something else. But perhaps

[1] "'*Ipsi tamen occidunt homines* [heretics], *nos laboramus pro vita et ducimus plures uxores.*' *Hæc lætissimo vultu dixit, non sine magno risu.*"

[2] Cp. *ibid.*, p. 139.

death will carry him, or her (Margaret), off before." A Hessian Councillor who was present quite bore out what Luther had said: Nothing was of any avail with the Landgrave, "what he once undertakes he cannot be induced to give up." In proof of this those present instanced the violence and utter injustice of the raid made on Würtemberg. "Because he is such a strange character," Luther remarked, "I must let it pass. The Emperor, moreover, will certainly not let him have his way."[1] "No sensible man would have undertaken that campaign, but he, carried away by fury, managed it quite well. Only wait a little! It [the new scandal] will pass!" Luther was also ready to acknowledge that the Landgrave, in spite of the promises and offers of the Emperor and Duke of Saxony, had remained so far "very faithful" to the Evangel.[2]

In the conversation on June 18, Luther adopts a forcedly light view of the matter: "It is only a three-months' affair, then the whole thing will fizzle out. Would to God Philip would look at it in this light instead of grieving so over it! The Papists are now Demeas and I Mitio"; with these words commences a string of word-for-word quotations from Terence's play "*Adelphi*," all concerning the harsh and violent Demeas, whom Luther takes as a figure of the Catholic Church, and the mild and peaceable Mitio, in whom Luther sees himself. In the Notes the sentences are given almost unaltered: "The prostitute and the matron living in one house." "A son is born." "Margaret has no dowry." "I, Mitio, say: 'May the gods direct all for the best!'" "Man's life is like a throw of the dice."[3]

"I overlook much worse things than this," he continues. "If anyone says to me: Are you pleased with what has taken place? I reply: No; oh, would that I could alter it. Since I cannot, I am resolved to bear it with equanimity. I commit it all to our dear God. Let Him preserve His Church as it now stands in order that it may remain in the unity of faith and doctrine and the pure confession of the Word; all I hope for is that it may never grow worse!"

"On rising from the table he said cheerfully: I will not give the devil and the Papists the satisfaction of thinking that I am troubled about the matter. God will see to it. To Him we commend the whole."

In thus shifting the responsibility from his own shoulders and putting it on God—Whose chosen instrument, even at the most

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 133. He speaks in the same way of the Emperor on p. 160.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 139. May 21 to June 11, 1540.
[3] For the quotations from Terence, see Rockwell, p. 164. Cp. Kroker, *ibid.*, p. 158.

critical juncture, he would still persuade himself he was—he finds the most convenient escape from anxiety and difficulty. It has all been laid upon us by God : " We must put up with the devil and his filth as long as we live." Therefore, forward against the Papists, who seek to conceal their " sodomitic vices " behind this bigamy ! " We may not and shall not yield. Let them do their dirty work and let us lay odds on."[1] With these words he is again quite himself. He is again the inspired prophet, oblivious of all save his mission to champion God's cause ; all his difficulties have vanished and even his worst moral faults have disappeared. But in this frame of mind Luther was not always able to persevere.

" All I hope for is that it may never grow worse." The depressing thought implied in these words lingered in the depths of his soul in spite of all his forced merriment and bravado. " Alas, my God, what have we not to put up with from fanatics and scandals ! One follows on the heels of the other ; when this [the bigamy] has been adjusted, then it is certain that something else will spring up, and many new sects will also arise. . . . But God will preserve His Christendom."[2]

Meanwhile the remarkably speedy recovery of his friend Melanchthon consoled him. Soon after the arrival of the letters mentioned above Luther set out for Weimar. His attentions to the sick man, and particularly his words of encouragement, succeeded, so to say, in recalling him to life. Luther speaks of it in his letters at that time as a " manifest miracle of God," which puts our unbelief to shame.[3] The fanciful embellishment which he gave to the incident when narrating it, making it into a sort of miracle, has left its traces in his friend Ratzeberger's account.[4]

Confident as Luther's language here seems, when it is a question of infusing new courage into himself, still he admits plainly enough one point, concerning which he has not a word to say in his correspondence with strangers or in his public utterances : A sin, over and above all his previous crimes, now weighed upon the Hessian and his party owing to what had taken place. He repeatedly uses the words " sin," " scandal," " offence " when speaking of the bigamy ; he feels the need of seeking consolation in the " unpardonable " sins of the Catholics for the moral failings of his own party, which, after all, would be remitted by God. Nor

[1] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 153.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 138.
[3] To Johann Lang, July 2, 1540, " Briefe," 4, p. 298 : " *miraculo Dei manifesto vivit.*"
[4] Ratzeberger, p. 102 f. Cp. present work, vol. iii., p. 162.

does the Landgrave's sin consist in his carelessness about keeping the matter secret. Luther compares his sin to David's, whose adultery had been forgiven by God, and reckons Philip's new sin amongst the sins of his co-religionists, who, for all their failings, were destined, with God's help, to overthrow the Papal Antichrist. "Would that I could alter it!" Such an admission he would not at any price make before the princely Courts concerned, or before the world. Still less would he have admitted publicly, that they were obliged "to put up with the devil's filth." It is therefore quite correct when Köstlin, in his Biography of Luther, points out, speaking of the Table-Talk: "That there had been sin and scandal, his words by no means deny."[1] Concerning the whole affair Köstlin moreover remarks: "Philip's bigamy is the greatest blot on the history of the Reformation, and remains a blot in Luther's life in spite of everything that can be alleged in explanation or excuse."[2]

F. W. Hassencamp, another Protestant, says in his "Hessische Kirchengeschichte": "His statements at that time concerning his share in the Landgrave's bigamy prove that, mentally, he was on the verge of despair. Low pleasantry and vulgarity are mixed up with threats and words of prayer." "Nowhere does the great Reformer appear so small as here."[3]—In the "Historisch-politische Blätter," in 1846, K. E. Jarcke wrote of the Table-Talk concerning the bigamy: "Rarely has any man, however coarse-minded, however blinded by hate and hardened by years of combat against his own conscience, expressed himself more hideously or with greater vulgarity."[4]

"After so repeatedly describing himself as the prophet of the Germans," says A. Hausrath, "he ought not to have had the weakness to seek a compromise between morality and policy, but, like the preacher robed in camels' hair, he should have boldly told the Hessian Princelet: It is not lawful for you to have her." Hausrath, in 1904, is voicing the opinion of many earlier Protestant historians when he regrets "that, owing to weariness and pressure from with-

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 526. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 478.
[3] Thus Hassencamp, vol. i., p. 507, though he was using the earlier editions of the Table-Talk, which are somewhat more circumspect.
[4] Vol. xviii., p. 461.

out," Luther "sanctioned an exception to God's unconditional command." "The band of Protestant leaders, once so valiant and upright," so he says, "had for once been caught sleeping. Evening was approaching and the day was drawing in, and the Lord their God had left them."[1]

Luther at the Conference of Eisenach. The Landgrave's Indignation.

An official conference of theologians and Councillors from Hesse and the Electorate of Saxony met at Eisenach at the instance of Philip on July 15, 1540, in order to deliberate on the best means of escaping the legal difficulty and of satisfying Philip's demand, that the theologians should give him their open support. Luther, too, put in an appearance and lost no time in entering into the debate with his wonted bluster.

According to one account, on their first arrival, he bitterly reproached ("*acerbissimis verbis*")[2] the Hessian theologians. The report of the Landgrave's sister says, that his long talk with Philip's Chancellor so affected the latter that the "tears streamed down his cheeks," particularly when Luther rounded on the Hessian Court officials for their too great inclination towards polygamy.[3] Though these reports of the effect of his strictures and exhortations may be exaggerated, no less than the remark of Jonas, who says, that the "Hessians went home from Eisenach with long faces,"[4] still it is quite likely that Luther made a great impression on many by his behaviour, particularly by the energy with which he now stood up for the cause of monogamy and appealed to the New Testament on its behalf.

Without denying the possibility of an exception in certain rare cases, he now insisted very strongly on the general prohibition.

The instructions given to the Hessians showed him plainly that the Landgrave was determined not to conceal his bigamy any longer, or to have it branded as mere concubinage; the theologians, so the document declares, would surely never have advised him to have recourse to sinful

[1] "Luthers Leben," 2, 1904, p. 403 f.
[2] Gualther, in Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 186, n. 1. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

concubinage. That he was not married to his second wife was a lie, which he would not consent to tell were he to be asked point-blank; his bigamy was really a dispensation "permitted by God, admitted by the learned, and consented to by his wife." If "hard pressed" he must disclose it. To introduce polygamy generally was of course quite a different matter, and was not to be thought of.[1]—Needless to say, Luther was ready enough to back up this last stipulation, for his own sake as much as for the Landgrave's.

During the first session of the conference, held in the Rathaus at Eisenach, Luther formally and publicly committed himself to the expedient at which he had faintly hinted even previously. He unreservedly proposed the telling of a lie. Should a situation arise where it was necessary to reply "yes" or "no," then they must resign themselves to a downright "No." "What harm would it do," he said on July 15, according to quite trustworthy notes,[2] "if a man told a good, lusty lie in a worthy cause and for the sake of the Christian Churches?" Similarly he said on July 17: "To lie in case of necessity, or for convenience, or in excuse, such lying would not be against God; He was ready to take such lies on Himself."[3]

The Protestant historian of the Hessian Bigamy says in excuse of this: "Luther was faced by the problem whether a lie told in case of necessity could be regarded as a sin at all"; he did not have recourse to the "expedient of a mental reservation [as he had done when recommending an ambiguous reply]"; he merely absolved "the '*mendacium officiosum*' [the useful lie] of sinfulness. This done, Luther could with a good conscience advise the telling of such a lie."[4]

Nevertheless Luther felt called upon again to return to

[1] "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 369 f.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 373. Concerning the notes which the editor calls the "Protokoll," see N. Paulus in "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 135, 1905, p. 323 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 375.

[4] Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 179. The Protestant theologian Th. Brieger says ("Luther und die Nebenehe," etc., "Preuss. Jahrb.." 135, 1909, p. 46): "As is known, in the summer of 1540, when the matter had already been notorious for months, Luther gave the Landgrave the advice, that he should give a flat denial of the step he had taken. . . . 'A lie of necessity was not against God; He was ready to take that upon Himself.'—Just as in our own day men of the highest moral character hold similar views concerning certain forms of the lie of necessity."

the alleged Confession made. He is even anxious to make out that his memorandum had been an Absolution coming under the Seal of Confession, and that the Absolution might not be "revealed": "If the Confession was to be regarded as secret, then the Absolution also must be secret."[1] "He considered the reply given in Confession as an Absolution," says Rockwell.[2] Moreover he gave it to be understood, that, should the Landgrave say he had committed bigamy as a right to which he was entitled, and not as a favour, then he, Luther, was quit of all responsibility; it was not the confessor's business to give public testimony concerning what had taken place in Confession.[3]

Practically, however, according to the notes of the conference, his advice still was that the Landgrave should conceal the bigamy behind the ambiguous declaration that: "Margaret is a concubine." Under the influence of the hostility to the bigamy shown by the Saxon Courts he urged so strongly the Bible arguments against polygamy, that the Hessians began to fear his withdrawal from his older standpoint.

The Old-Testament examples, he declared emphatically, could neither "exclude nor bind," i.e. could not settle the matter either way; Paul's words could not be overthrown; in the New Testament nothing could be found (in favour of bigamy), "on the contrary the New Testament confirmed the original institution [monogamy]"; therefore "since both the Divine and the secular law were at one, nothing could be done against it; he would not take it upon his conscience." It is true, that, on the other side, must be put the statement, that he saw no reason why

[1] "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 373.

[2] P. 182.—Rockwell (p. 181, n. 4) also reminds us that Luther had written to the Elector: "In matters of Confession it is seemly that both the circumstances and the advice given in Confession" should be kept secret. Luther, in "Lauterbachs Tagebuch," p. 196, see p. 37, n. 2. The Elector wrote to the Landgrave in a letter dated June 27, 1540 (quoted by Rockwell, *ibid.*, from the archives), that the marriage could not be openly discussed, because, otherwise, "the Seal of Confession would be broken in regard to those who had given the dispensation." In this he re-echoes Luther.—Rockwell, p. 182 (cp. p. 185, n. 3), thinks, that Luther was following the "more rigorous" theologians of earlier days, who had taught that it was "a mortal sin for the penitent to reveal what the priest had told him." This is not the place to rectify such misunderstandings.

[3] Cp. Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 175, with a reference to Luther's statement of July 17: If the Landgrave would not be content with a dispensation, "and claimed it as a right, then they were quit of their advice" ("Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 375). It is difficult to follow Luther through all his attempts to evade the issue.

the Prince should not take the matter upon his own conscience, declare himself convinced, and thus "set their [the theologians'] consciences free." That he still virtually stood by what had happened, is also seen from his plain statement: "Many things are right before God in the tribunal of conscience, which, to the world, must appear wrong." "In support of this he brought forward the example," so the report of the Conference proceeds, "of the seduction of a virgin and of an illegitimate birth." He also lays stress on the principle that they, the theologians, had merely "to dispense according to God's command in the tribunal of conscience," but were unable to bear witness to it publicly; hence their advice to the Landgrave had in reality never been given at all, for it was no business of the "*forum externum*"; the Landgrave had acted in accordance with his own ideas, just as he had undertaken many things "against their advice," for instance, "the raid on Wirtenbergk." He was doing the same in "this instance too, and acting on his own advice."

Again, for his own safety, he makes a request: "Beg him [the Prince] most diligently to draw in [to keep it secret]," otherwise, so he threatens, he will declare that "Luther acted like a fool, and will take the shame on himself"; he would "say: I made a mistake and I retract it; he would retract it even at the expense of his own honour; as for his honour he would pray God to restore it."[1]

In a written memorandum which he presented during the Conference he makes a similar threat, which, however, as already shown in the case of Thann (above, p. 40 f.), it is wrong to take as meaning that he really declared he had acted wrongly in the advice given to the Landgrave.

He begs the Landgrave, "again to conceal the matter and keep it secret; for to defend it publicly as right was impossible"; should the Landgrave, however, be determined, by revealing it, to "cause annoyance and disgrace to our Confession, Churches and Estates," then it was his duty beforehand to consult all these as to whether they were willing to take the responsibility, since without them the matter could not take place and Luther and Melanchthon alone "could do nothing without their authority. And rather than assist in publicly defending it, I would repudiate my advice and Master Philip's [Melanchthon's], were it made public, for it was not a public advice, and is annulled by publication. Or, if this is no use, and they insist on calling it a counsel and not a Confession,[2] which it really was, then I should rather admit that I made a mistake and acted foolishly and now crave for pardon; for the scandal is great and intolerable. And my gracious Lord the Landgrave ought not to forget that his Serene Highness was lucky enough in being able to take the girl secretly with a good conscience, by virtue of our advice

[1] "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 373 f. "Anal. Luth.," ed. Kolde, p. 356 *seq.*

[2] "Bichte," not "Bitte," is clearly the true reading here.

in Confession; seeing that H.S.H. has no need or cause for making the matter public, and can easily keep it secret, which would obviate all this great trouble and misfortune. Beyond this I shall not go."[1]

These attempts at explanation and subterfuge to which the sadly embarrassed authors of the "testimony" had recourse were keenly criticised by Feige, the Hessian Chancellor, in the sober, legal replies given by him at the Conference.[2] He pointed out, that: The Landgrave, his master, could not now "regard or admit his marriage to be a mere '*liaison*'"; he would indeed keep it secret so far as in him lay, but deny it he could not without prejudice to his own honour; "since it has become so widely known"; those to whom he had appealed, "as the chiefs of our Christian Churches, for a testimony," viz. Luther and his theologians, must not now leave him in the lurch, "but bar witness, should necessity arise, that he had not acted unchristianly in this matter, or against God." Philip, moreover, from the very first, had no intention of restricting the matter to the private tribunal of conscience; the request brought by Bucer plainly showed, that he "was publicly petitioning the tribunal of the Church." The fact is that the instructions given to Bucer clearly conveyed the Prince's intention of making public the bigamy and the advice by which it was justified.

Hence, proceeded Feige: Out with it plainly, out with the theological grounds which "moved the theologians to grant such a dispensation!" If these grounds were not against God, then the Landgrave could take his stand on them before the secular law, the Emperor, the Fiscal and the Courts of Justice. Should the theologians, however, really wish to "repudiate" their advice, nothing would be gained; the scandal would be just as great as if they had "admitted" it; and further, it would cause a split in their own confession, for the Prince would be obliged to "disclose the advice." Luther wanted to get out of the hole by saying he had acted foolishly! Did he not see how "detrimental this would be to his reputation and teaching"? He should "consider what he had written in his Exposition of Genesis twelve years previously, and that this had never been called into question by any of his disciples or followers." He should remember all that had been done against the Papacy through his work, for which the Bible gave far less sanction than for the dispensation, and which "nevertheless had been accepted and maintained, in opposition to the worldly powers, by an appeal to a Christian Council."

Hence the Landgrave must urgently request, concludes Feige, that the theologians would, at least "until the Council," take his part and "admit that what he had done had been agreeable to God."

The Saxon representatives present at the Conference

[1] "Briefe," 6, p. 272 f., dated July 20, 1540.
[2] Kolde, *loc. cit.*, p. 357–360.

were, however, ready to follow the course indicated by Luther in case of necessity, viz. to tell a downright lie; rather than that the Prince should be forced to vindicate openly his position it was better to deny it flatly. They declared, without, however, convincing the Conference, "that a flat denial was less culpable before God and in conscience—as could be proved by many examples from Scripture—than to cause a great scandal and lamentable falling away of many good people by a plain and open admission and vindication."[1]

Philip of Hesse was not particularly edified by the result of the Eisenach Conference. Of all the reports which gradually reached him, those which most aroused his resentment were, first, that Luther should expect him to tell a lie and deny the second marriage, and, secondly, his threat to withdraw the testimony, as issued in error.

Luther had, so far, avoided all direct correspondence with the Landgrave concerning the disastrous affair. Now, however, he was forced to make some statement in reply to a not very friendly letter addressed to him by the Prince.[2]

In this Philip, alluding to the invitation to tell a lie, says: "I will not lie, for lying has an evil sound and no Apostle or even Christian has ever taught it, nay, Christ has forbidden it and said we should keep to yea and nay. That I should declare the lady to be a whore, that I refuse to do, for your advice does not permit of it. I should surely have had no need of your advice to take a whore, neither does it do you credit." Yet he declares himself ready to give an "obscure reply," i.e. an ambiguous one; without need he would not disclose the marriage.

Nor does Luther's threat of retracting the advice and of saying that he had "acted foolishly" affright him. The threat he unceremoniously calls a bit of foolery. "As to what you told my Councillors, viz. that, rather than reveal my reasons, you would say you had acted foolishly, please don't commit such folly on my account, for then I will confess the reasons, and, in case of necessity, prove them now or later, unless the witnesses die in the meantime." "Nothing more dreadful has ever come to my ears than that

[1] Kolde, *loc. cit.*, p. 362 *seq.*
[2] Dated July 18, 1540, "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 380 ff.

it should have occurred to a brave man to retract what he had granted by a written dispensation to a troubled conscience. If you can answer for it to God, why do you fear and shrink from the world ? If the matter is right '*in conscientia*' before the Almighty, the Eternal and Immortal God, what does the accursed, sodomitic, usurious and besotted world matter ? " Here he is using the very words in which Luther was wont to speak of the world and of the contempt with which it should be met. He proceeds with a touch of sarcasm : " Would to God that you and your like would inveigh against and punish those in whom you see such things daily, i.e. adultery, usury and drunkenness—and who yet are supposed to be members of the Church—not merely in writings and sermons but with serious considerations and the ban which the Apostles employed, in order that the whole world may not be scandalised. You see these things, yet what do you and the others do ? " In thus finding fault with the Wittenberg habits, he would appear to include the Elector of Saxony, who had a reputation for intemperance. He knew that Luther's present attitude was in part determined by consideration for his sovereign. In his irritation he also has a sly hit at the Wittenberg theologians : At Eisenach his love for the " lady " (Margaret) had been looked upon askance ; " I confess that I love her, but in all honour. . . . But that I should have taken her because she pleased me, that is only natural, for I see that you holy people also take those that please you. Therefore you may well bear with me, a poor sinner."

Luther replied on July 24,[1] that he had not deserved that the Landgrave should write to him in so angry a tone. The latter was wrong in supposing, that he wanted to get his neck out of the noose and was not doing all that he could to " serve the Prince humbly and faithfully." It was not no his own account that he wished to keep his advice secret ; " for though all the devils wished the advice to be made public, I would give them by God's Grace such an answer that they would not find any fault in it."

It was, so Luther says in this letter, a secret counsel as " all the devils " knew, the keeping secret of which he had requested, " with all diligence," and which, even at the worst, he would be

[1] " Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 273 ff.

the last to bring to light. That he, or the Prince himself, was bound to silence by the Seal of Confession, he does not say, though this would have been the place to emphasise it. He merely states that he knew what, in the case of a troubled conscience, "might be remitted out of mercy before God," and what was not right apart from this necessity. "I should be sorry to see your Serene Highness starting a literary feud with me." It was true he could not allow the Prince, who was "of the same faith" as himself, "to incur danger and disgrace"; but, should he disclose the counsel, the theologians would not be in a position to "get him out of the bother," because, in the eyes of the world, "even a hundred Luthers, Philips and others" could not change the law; the secret marriage could never be publicly held as valid, though valid in the tribunal of conscience. He wished to press the matter before the worldly authorities; but here the Prince's marriage would never be acknowledged; he would only be exposing himself to penalties, and withdrawing himself from the "protection and assistance of the Divine Judgment" under which he stood so long as he regarded it as a marriage merely in conscience.

In this letter Luther opposes the "making public of the advice," which he dreaded, by the most powerful motive at his command: The result of the disclosure would be, that "at last your Serene Highness would be obliged to put away your sweetheart as a mere whore." He would do better to allow her to be now regarded as a "whore, although to us three, i.e. in God's sight, she is really a wedded concubine"; in all this the Prince would still have a good conscience, "for the whole affair was due to his distress of conscience, as we believe, and, hence, to your Serene Highness's conscience, she is no mere prostitute."

There were, however, three more bitter pills for the Landgrave to swallow. He had pleaded his distress of conscience. Luther hints, that, "one of our best friends" had said: "The Landgrave would not be able to persuade anyone" that the bigamy was due to distress of conscience; which was as much as to say, that "Dr. Martin believed what it was impossible to believe, had deceived himself and been willingly led astray." He, Luther, however, still thought that the Prince had been serious in what he had said "secretly in Confession"; nevertheless the mere suspicion might suffice to "render the advice worthless," and then Philip would stand alone. . . . The Landgrave, moreover, had unkindly hinted in his letter, that, "we theologians take those who please us." "Why do not you [Princes] do differently?" he replies. "I, at least, trust that this will be your Serene Highness's experience with your beloved sweetheart." "Pretty women are to be wedded either for the sake of the children which spring from this merry union, or to prevent fornication. Apart from this I do not see of what use beauty is." "Marry in haste and repent at leisure" was the result of following our passions, according to the proverb. Lastly, Luther does not hide from the Landgrave that his carelessness in keeping the secret had brought not

only the Prince but "the whole confession" into disrepute, though "the good people" belonging to the faith were really in no way involved in what Philip had done. "If each were to do what pleased him and throw the responsibility on the pious" this would be neither just nor reasonable.

Such are the reasons by which he seeks to dissuade the warrior-Prince from his idea of publishing the fatal Wittenberg "advice," to impel him to allow the marriage to "remain an '*ambiguum*,'" and "not openly to boast that he had lawfully wedded his sweetheart."

He also gives Philip to understand that he will get a taste of the real Luther should he not obey him, or should he expose him by publishing the "advice," or otherwise in writing. He says: "If it comes to writing I shall know how to extricate myself and leave your Serene Highness sticking in the mud, but this I shall not do unless I can't help it." The Prince's allusion to the Emperor's anger which must be avoided, did not affright Luther in the least. In his concluding words his conviction of his mission and the thought of the anti-Evangelical attitude of the Emperor carry him away. "Were this menace to become earnest, I should tweak the Emperor's forelock, confront him with his practices and read him a good lecture on the texts: 'Every man is a liar' and 'Put not your trust in Princes.' Was he not indeed a liar and a false man, he who 'rages against God's own truth,'" i.e. opposes Luther's Evangel?

Faced by such unbounded defiance Philip and his luckless bigamy, in spite of the assurance he saw fit to assume, seemed indeed in a bad way. One can feel how Luther despised the man. In spite of his painful embarrassment, he is aware of his advantage. He indeed stood in need of the Landgrave's assistance in the matter of the new Church system, but the latter was entirely dependent on Luther's help in his disastrous affair.

Hence Philip, in his reply, is more amiable, though he really demolishes Luther's objections. This reply he sent the day after receiving Luther's letter.[1]

Certain words which had been let fall at Eisenach had "enraged and maddened" him (Philip). He had, however, good "scriptural warrant for his action," and Luther should not forget that, "what we did, we did with a good conscience." There was thus no need for the Prince to bow before the Wittenbergers. "We are well aware that you and Philip [Melanchthon] cannot defend us against the secular powers, nor have we ever asked this of you." "That Margaret should not be looked upon as a prostitute, this we

[1] On July 27, "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 385 ff.

demand and insist upon, and the presence of pious men [Melanchthon, etc.] at the wedding, your advice, and the marriage contract, will prove what she is." "In fine, we will allow it to remain a secret marriage and dispensation, and will give a reply which shall conceal the matter, and be neither yea nor nay, as long as we can and may." He insists, however, that, "if we cannot prevent it," then we shall bring the Wittenberg advice "into the light of day."

As to telling a downright lie, that was impossible, because the marriage contract was in the hands of his second wife's friends, who would at once take him to task.

"It was not our intention to enter upon a wordy conflict, or to set your pen to work." Luther had said, that he would know how to get out of a tight corner, but what business was that of Philip's: "We care not whether you get out or in." As to Luther's malicious allusion to his love for the beautiful Margaret, he says: "Since she took a fancy to us, we were fonder of her than of another, but, had she not liked us, then we should have taken another." Hence he would have committed bigamy in any case. He waxes sarcastic about Luther's remark, that the world would never acknowledge her as his wife, hinting that Luther's own wife, and the consorts of the other preachers who had formerly been monks or priests, were likewise not regarded by the imperial lawyers as lawful wedded wives. He looked upon Margaret as his "wife according to God's Word and your advice; such is God's will; the world may regard our wife, yours and the other preachers' as it pleases."

Philip, however, was diplomatic enough to temper all this with friendly assurances. "We esteem you," he says, "as a very eminent theologian, nor shall we doubt you, so long as God continues to give you His Spirit, which Spirit we still recognise in you. . . . We find no fault with you personally and consider you a man who looks to God. As to our other thoughts, they are just thoughts, and come and go duty free."

These "duty-free" thoughts, as we readily gather from the letter, concerned the Courts of Saxony, whose influence on Luther was a thorn in the Landgrave's flesh. There was the "haughty old Vashti" at Dresden (Duchess Catherine), without whom the "matter would not have gone so far"; then, again, there was Luther's "Lord, the Elector." The

" cunning of the children of the world," which the Landgrave feared would infect Luther, had its head-quarters at these Courts. But if it came to the point, such things would be " disclosed and manifested " by him, the Landgrave, to the Elector and " many other princes and nobles," that " you would have to excuse us, because what we did was not done merely from love, but for conscience's sake and in order to escape eternal damnation ; and your Lord, the Elector, will have to admit it too and be our witness." And in still stronger language, he " cites " the Elector, or, rather, both the Elector and himself, to appear before Luther : " If this be not sufficient, then demand of us, and of your master, that we tell you in confession such things as will satisfy you concerning us. They would, however, sound ill, so help me God, and we hope to God that He will by all means preserve us from such in future. You wish to learn it, then learn it, and do not look for anything good but for the worst, and if we do not speak the truth, may God strike us " ; " to prove it " we are quite ready. Other things (see below, xxiv., 2) make it probable, that the Elector is here accused as being Philip's partner in some very serious sin. It looks as though Philip's intention was to frighten him and prevent his proceeding further against him. Since Luther in all probability brought the letter to the cognisance of the Elector, the step was, politically, well thought out.

Melanchthon's Complaints.

Melanchthon, as was usual with him, adopted a different tone from Luther's in the matter. He was very sad, and wrote lengthy letters of advice.

As early as June 15, to ease his mind, he sent one to the Elector Johann Frederick, containing numerous arguments against polygamy, but leaving open the possibility of secret bigamy.[1] Friends informed the Landgrave that anxiety about the bigamy was the cause of Melanchthon's serious illness. Philip, on the other hand, wrote, that it was the Saxon Courts which were worrying him.[2] Owing to his weakness he was unable to take part in the negotiations at Eisenach. On his return to Wittenberg he declared aloud

[1] Rockwell, *loc. cit.*, p. 190. Cp. p. 61.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 192, from Philip's letter to Luther, on July 18.

that he and Luther had been outwitted by the malice of Philip of Hesse. The latter's want of secrecy seemed to show the treasonable character of the intrigue. To Camerarius he wrote on Aug. 24: "We are disgraced by a horrid business concerning which I must say nothing. I will give you the details in due time."[1] On Sep. 1, he admits in a letter to Veit Dietrich: "We have been deceived, under a semblance of piety, by another Jason, who protested conscientious motives in seeking our assistance, and who even swore that this expedient was essential for him."[2] He thus gives his friend a peep into the Wittenberg advice, of which he was the draughtsman, and in which he, unlike Luther, could see nothing that came under the Seal of Confession. The name of the deceitful polygamist Jason he borrows from Terence, on whom he was then lecturing. Since Luther, about the same time, also quotes from Terence when speaking at table about Philip's bigamy, we may infer that he and Melanchthon had exchanged ideas on the work in question (the "*Adelphi*"). Melanchthon was also fond of dubbing the Hessian "Alcibiades" on account of his dissembling and cunning.[3]

Most remarkable, however, is the assertion he makes in his annoyance, viz. that the Landgrave was on the point of losing his reason: "This is the beginning of his insanity."[4] Luther, too, had said he feared he was going crazy, as it ran in the family.[5] Philip's father, Landgrave William II, had succumbed to melancholia as the result of syphilis. The latter's brother, William I, had also been insane. Philip's son, William IV, sought to explain the family trouble by a spell cast over one of his ancestors by the "courtisans" at Venice.[6] In 1538, previous to the bigamy scandal, Henry of Brunswick had written, that the Landgrave, owing to the French disease, was able to sleep but little, and would soon go mad.[7]

Melanchthon became very sensitive to any mention of the Hessian bigamy. At table, on one occasion in Aug., 1540,

[1] Rockwell, *loc. cit.*, p. 193. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 194.
[3] "*Alcibiadea natura non Achillea.*" "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 1079. Cp. 4, p. 116. Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 194.
[4] "*Hæc sunt principia furoris.*" Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 143. Above, p. 45.
[5] *Ibid.*, on the same day (June 11, 1540), Luther's statement. Above, p. 44.
[6] Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 159, n. 2; p. 4, n. 1. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

Luther spoke of love ; no one was quite devoid of love because all at least desired enjoyment ; one loved his wife, another his children, others, like Carlstadt, loved honour. When Bugenhagen, with an allusion to the Landgrave, quoted the passage from Virgil's "*Bucolica*" : "*Omnia vincit amor et nos cedamus amori*," Melanchthon jumped up and cried : "Pastor, leave out that passage."[1]

Brooding over the permission given, the scholar sought earnestly for grounds of excuse for the bigamy. "I looked well into it beforehand," he writes in 1543, "I also told the Doctor [Luther] to weigh well whether he could be mixed up in the affair. There are, however, circumstances of which the women [their Ducal opponents at Meissen] are not aware, and understand not. The man [the Landgrave] has many strange ideas on the Deity. He also confided to me things which I have told no one but Dr. Martin ; on account of all this we have had no small trouble."[2] We must not press the contradiction this presents to Melanchthon's other statement concerning the Prince's hypocrisy.

Melanchthon's earlier letter dated Sep. 1, 1540, Camerarius ventured to publish in the collection of his friend's letters only with omissions and additions which altered the meaning.

Until 1904 this letter, like Melanchthon's other letter on Luther's marriage (vol. ii., p. 176), was only known in the amended form. W. Rockwell has now published the following suppressed passages from the original in the Chigiana at Rome, according to the manuscript prepared by Nicholas Müller for the new edition of Melanchthon's correspondence. Here Melanchthon speaks out plainly without being conscious of any "Secret of Confession," and sees little objection to the complete publication by the Wittenbergers of their advice. "I blame no one in this matter except the man who deceived us with a simulated piety ('*simulatione pietatis fefellit*'). Nor did he adhere to our trusty counsel [to keep the matter secret]. He swore that the remedy was necessary. Therefore, that the universal biblical precept [concerning the unity of marriage] : 'They shall be two in one

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 175, 7–24 Aug., 1540.

[2] To the Elector Johann Frederick, March, 1543, see Rockwell p. 199 f., from archives. Rockwell quotes the following from a passage in which several words have been struck out : "I have always preferred that he [. . . ?] should deal with the matter, than that he should altogether [. . .?]." Was the meaning : He preferred that Luther should be involved in such an affair rather than that he [the Landgrave] should desert their party altogether ? Other utterances of Melanchthon's and Luther's, given above, would favour this sense.

flesh' might be preserved, we counselled him, secretly, and without giving scandal to others, to make use of the remedy in case of necessity. I will not be judge of his conscience, for he still sticks to his assertion ; but the scandal he might well have avoided had he chosen. Either [what follows is in Greek] love got the upper hand, or here is the beginning and foretaste of that insanity which runs in the family. Luther blamed him severely and he thereupon promised to keep silence. But . . . [Melanchthon has crossed out the next sentence : As time goes on he changes his views] whatever he may do in the matter, we are free to publish our decision (' *edere sententiam nostram* ') ; for in it too we vindicated the law. He himself told me, that formerly he had thought otherwise, but certain people had convinced him that the thing was quite indifferent. He has unlearned men about him who have written him long dissertations, and who are not a little angry with me because I blamed them to their teeth. But in the beginning we were ignorant of their prejudices." He goes on to speak of Philip as " depraved by an Alcibiadean nature (' *Alcibiadea natura perditus* '),'' an expression which also fell under the red pencil of the first editor, Camerarius.[1]

Literary Feud with Duke Henry of Brunswick.

Prominent amongst those who censured the bigamy was the Landgrave's violent opponent Duke Henry of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. The Duke, a leader of the Catholic Alliance formed to resist the Schmalkalden Leaguers in North Germany, published in the early 'forties several controversial works against Philip of Hesse. This brisk and active opponent, whose own character was, however, by no means unblemished, seems to have had a hand in the attacks of other penmen upon the Landgrave. Little by little he secured fairly accurate accounts of the proceedings in Hesse and at Wittenberg, and, as early as July 22, 1540, made a general and public reference to what had taken place.[2]

In a tract published on Nov. 3, he said quite openly that the Landgrave had " two wives at the same time, and had thus rendered himself liable to the penalties against double marriage." The Elector of Saxony had, however, permitted " his biblical experts at the University of Wittenberg to assist in dealing with these nice affairs," nay, had himself concurred in the bigamy.[3]

[1] Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 194. Text of Camerarius in " Corp. ref.," 3, p. 1077 *seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

[3] " Ergründete . . . Duplicä . . . wider des Churfürsten von Sachsen Abdruck," etc. The work is directed primarily against the Elector Johann Frederick, the " drunken Nabal of Saxony," as the author terms him.

In consequence of these and other charges contained in the Duke's screed, Luther wrote the violent libel entitled "Wider Hans Worst," of which the still existing manuscript shows in what haste and frame of mind the work was dashed off. All his exasperation at the events connected with the bigamy now become public boils up in his attack on the "Bloodhound, and incendiary Harry" of Brunswick, and the "clerical devil's whores in the Popish robbers' cave."[1] Of Henry's charge he speaks in a way which is almost more than a mere concealing of the bigamy.[2] He adds: "The very name of Harry stinks like devil's ordure freshly dropped in Germany. Did he perchance desire that not he alone should stink so horribly in the nostrils of others, but that he should make other honourable princes to stink also?" He was a renegade and a coward, who did everything like an assassin. "He ought to be set up like a eunuch, dressed in cap and bells, with a feather-brush in his hand to guard the women and that part on account of which they are called women, as the rude Germans say." "Assassin-adultery, assassin-arson indeed became this 'wild cat,'" etc.

Even before this work was finished, in February, 1541, a pseudonymous attack upon the Landgrave appeared which "horrified Cruciger,"[3] who was with Luther at Wittenberg. The Landgrave is here upbraided with the bigamy, the reproaches culminating in the following: "I cannot but believe that the devil resides in your Serene Highness, and

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 58.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 77: "Concerning the Landgrave, whom he abuses as bigamous, an Anabaptist and even as having submitted to re-baptism, though in such ambiguous terms as to suit a cardinal or a weather-cock, so that were his proofs asked for he could twist his tongue round and say, that he was not sure it was so, but merely suspected it . . . of this I will not now say much. The Landgrave is man enough and has learned men about him. I know of one Landgravine in Hesse [one only bore the title], who is and is to be styled wife and mother in Hesse, and, in any case, no other will be able to bear young Princes and suckle them; I refer to the Duchess, daughter of Duke George of Saxony. And if her Prince has strayed, that was owing to your bad example, which has brought things to such a pass, that the very peasants do not look upon it as sin, and have made it difficult for us to maintain matrimony in honour and esteem, nay, to re-establish it. From the very beginning none has abused matrimony more grievously than Harry of Wolffenbüttel, the holy, sober man." That is all Luther says of the Hessian bigamy.

[3] Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 107, on the writing of "Justinus Warsager" against the Landgrave, with a reference to "Corp. ref.," 4, p. 112.

that the Münster habit has infected your S.H., so that your S.H. thinks that you may take as many wives as you please, even as the King of Münster did."

An anonymous reply to this screed penned by the pastor of Melsungen, Johann Lening, is the first attempt at a public justification of Philip's bigamy. The author only disclaims the charge that the Landgrave had intended to " introduce a new ' *ius*.' "[1]

Henry of Brunswick replied to " Hans Worst " and to this vindication of the bigamy in his " *Quadruplicæ* " of May 31, 1541. He said there of Luther's " Hans Worst " : " That we should have roused Luther, the arch-knave, arch-heretic, desperate scoundrel and godless arch-miscreant, to put forth his impious, false, unchristian, lousy and rascally work is due to the scamp [on the throne] of Saxony." " We have told the truth so plainly to his Münsterite brother, the Landgrave, concerning his bigamy, that he has been unable to deny it, but admits it, only that he considers that he did not act dishonourably, but rightly and in a Christian fashion, which, however, is a lie and utterly untrue." In some of his allegations then and later, such as that the Landgrave was thinking of taking a third wife " in addition to his numerous concubines," and that he had submitted to re-baptism, the princely knight-errant was going too far. A reply and defence of the Landgrave, published in 1544, asserts with unconscious humour that the Landgrave knew how to take seriously " to heart what God had commanded concerning marriage . . . and also the demands of conjugal fidelity and love."

Johann Lening, pastor of Melsungen, formerly a Carthusian in the monastery of Eppenberg, had been the most zealous promoter of the bigamy. He was also very active in rendering literary service in its defence. The string of Bible proofs alleged by Philip in his letter to Luther of July 18 (above, p. 55 f.) can undoubtedly be traced to his inspiration. In October, 1541, he was at Augsburg with Gereon Sailer,[2] the physician so skilled in the treatment of syphilis ; a little later Veit Dietrich informed Melanchthon of his venereal trouble.[3] He was much disliked by the Saxons and the Wittenbergers on account of his defence of

[1] Cp. Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 108.
[2] " Philipps Briefwechsel," 3, 1891, p. 186, n. 1.
[3] On Dec. 11, 1541. Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 117, n. 1.

his master. Chancellor Brück speaks of him as a " violent, bitter man " ; Luther calls him the " *Melsingen nebulo* " and the " *monstrum Carthusianum* " ;[1] Frederick Myconius speaks of the " *lenones Leningi* " and fears he will catch the " *Dionysiorum vesania.*"

Such was the author of the " *Dialogue of Huldericus Neobulus,*" which has become famous in the history of the Hessian Bigamy ; it appeared in 1541, towards the end of summer, being printed at Marburg at Philip's expense.

The book was to answer in the affirmative the question contained in the sub-title : " Whether it be in accordance with or contrary to the Divine, natural, Imperial and ecclesiastical law, to have simultaneously more than one wife." The author, however, clothed his affirmation in so pedantic and involved a form as to make it unintelligible to the uninitiate so that Philip could say that, " it would be a temptation to nobody to follow his example," and that it tended rather to dissuade from bigamy than to induce people to commit it.[2]

This work was very distasteful to the Courts of Saxony, and Luther soon made up his mind to write against it.

He wrote on Jan. 10, 1542, to Justus Menius, who had sent him a reply of his own, intended for the press : " Your book will go to the printers, but mine is already waiting publication ; your turn will come next. . . . How this man disgusts me with the insipid, foolish and worthless arguments he excretes." To this Pandora all the Hessian gods must have contributed. " Bucer smells bad enough already on account of the Ratisbon dealings. . . .May Christ keep us well disposed towards Him and steadfast in His Holy Word. Amen."[3] From what Luther says he was not incensed at the Dialogue of Neobulus so much on account of its favouring polygamy itself, but because, not content with allowing bigamy conditionally, and before the tribunal

[1] To Justus Menius, Jan. 10, 1542, " Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 426. Cp. above, p. 25 f., for Luther's opinion that Lening had been the first to suggest the plan of the bigamy to the Landgrave. For other points in the text, see Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 117 f. Koldewey remarks of Lening, that " his wretched servility and his own lax morals had made him the advocate of the Landgrave's carnal lusts." (" Theol. Studien und Kritiken," 57, 1884, p. 560.)

[2] The Landgrave to Sailer, Aug. 27, 1541, in " Philipps Briefwechsel," 3, p. 148, and to Melanchthon.

[3] See above, note 1.

of conscience, it sought also to erect it into a public law. When, however, both Elector and Landgrave[1] begged him to refrain from publishing his reply, he agreed and stopped the printers, though only after a part of it had already left the press.[2]

His opinion concerning the permissibility of bigamy in certain cases he never changed in spite of the opposition it met with. But, in Luther's life, hardly an instance can be cited of his having shrunk back when attacked. Rarely if ever did his defiance—which some admire—prove more momentous than on this occasion. An upright man is not unwilling to allow that he may have been mistaken in a given instance, and, when better informed, to retract. Luther, too, might well have appealed to the shortness of the time allowed him for the consideration of the counsel he had given at Wittenberg. Without a doubt his hand had been forced. Further, it might have been alleged in excuse for his act, that misapprehension of the Bible story of the patriarchs had dragged him to consequences which he had not foreseen. It would have been necessary for him to revise completely his Old-Testament exegesis on this point, and to free it from the influence of his disregard of ecclesiastical tradition and the existing limitations on matrimony. In place of this, consideration for the exalted rank of his petitioners induced him to yield to the plausible reasons brought forward by a smooth-tongued agent and to remain silent.

The tract of Menius, on the same political grounds, was likewise either not published at all or withdrawn later. The truth was, that it was desirable that the Hessian affair should come under discussion as little as possible, so that no grounds should be given " to increase the gossip," as Luther put it in 1542 ; " I would rather it were left to settle as it began, than that the filth should be stirred up under the noses of the whole world."[3]

[1] In the letter to Melanchthon, quoted p. 66, note 2, Philip says, that if Luther's work had not yet appeared Melanchthon was to explain to him that the Dialogue of Neobulus tended rather to dissuade from, than to permit bigamy, " so that he might forbear from such [reply], or so moderate it that it may not injure us or what he himself previously sanctioned and wrote [i.e. in the Wittenberg testimony]."

[2] Printed in " Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 206 ff.

[3] Luther to the Electoral Chancellor, Brück, " shortly after Jan. 10," " Briefe," 6, p. 296, where he also approvingly notes that Menius had

The work of Neobulus caused much heart-burning among the Swiss reformers; of this we hear from Bullinger, who also, in his Commentary on Matthew, in 1542, expressed himself strongly against the tract.[1] His successor, Rudolf Gualther, Zwingli's son-in-law, wrote that it was shocking that a Christian Prince should have been guilty of such a thing and that theologians should have been found to father, advocate and defend it.[2]

In time, however, less was heard of the matter and the rumours died down. A peace was even patched up between the Landgrave and the Emperor, chiefly because the Elector of Saxony was against the Schmalkalden League being involved in the Hessian affair. Without admitting the reality of the bigamy, and without even mentioning it, Philip concluded with Charles V a treaty which secured for him safety. Therein he made to the Emperor political concessions of such importance[3] as to arouse great discontent and grave suspicions in the ranks of the Evangelicals. At a time when the German Protestants were on the point of appealing to France for assistance against Charles V, he promised to do his best to hinder the French and to support the Imperial interests. In the matter of the Emperor's feud with Jülich, he pledged himself to neutrality, thus ensuring the Emperor's success. After receiving the Imperial pardon on Jan. 24, 1541, his complete reconciliation was guaranteed by the secret compact of Ratisbon on June 13 of the same year. He had every reason to be content, and as the editor of Philip's correspondence with Bucer writes,[4] what better could even the Emperor desire? The great danger which threatened was a league of the German Protestants with France. And now the Prince, who alone was able to bring this about, withdrew from the opposition party, laid his cards on the table, left the road open to Guelders, offered

not written "'*contra necessitatem et casualem dispensationem individuæ personæ*,' of which we, as confessors, treated"; he only "inveighed '*contra legem et exemplum publicum polygamiæ*,' which we also do." Still, he finds that Menius "excuses the old patriarchs too feebly."

[1] Cp. his outburst against "those who teach polygamy" in his "In evangelium s. Mt. Commentaria," Tiguri, 1543, p. 179.

[2] To Oswald Myconius, Sep. 13, 1540, in Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 325: "*pudet imprimis inter theologos talium authores, tutores et patronos posse reperiri.*"

[3] Cp. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (*Engl. Trans.*), 6, p. 149 f.; and Rockwell, *ibid.*, pp. 130, 132.

[4] Max Lenz, in "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 497.

his powerful support both within and outside of the Empire, and, in return, asked for nothing but the Emperor's favour. The Landgrave's princely allies in the faith were pained to see him forsake "the opposition [to the Emperor]. For their success the political situation was far more promising than in the preceding winter. An alliance with France offered [the Protestants] a much greater prospect of success than one with England, for François I was far more opposed to the Emperor than was Henry VIII. . . . Of the German Princes, William of Jülich had already pledged himself absolutely to the French King."[1]

Philip was even secretly set on obtaining the Pope's sanction to the bigamy. Through Georg von Carlowitz and Julius Pflug he sought to enter into negotiations with Rome; they were not to grudge an outlay of from 3000 to 4000 gulden as an "offering."[2] As early as the end of 1541 Chancellor Feige received definite instructions in the matter.

The Hessian Court had, however, in the meantime been informed, that Cardinal Contarini had given it to be understood that "no advice or assistance need be looked for from the Pope."[3]

Landgravine Christina died in 1549, and, after her death, the unfortunate marriage was gradually buried in oblivion. —But did Landgrave Philip, after the conclusion of the second marriage, cease from immoral intercourse with women as he had so solemnly promised Luther he would?

In the Protestant periodical, "Die christliche Welt,"[4] attention was drawn to a Repertory of the archives of Philip of Hesse, published in 1904,[5] in which a document is mentioned which would seem to show that Philip was unfaithful even subsequent to his marriage with Margaret. The all too brief description of the document is as follows: "Suit of Johann Meckbach against Landgrave Philip on behalf of Lady Margaret; the Landgrave's infidelity; Margaret's demand that her marriage be made public." "This sounds suspicious," remarks W. Köhler, "we have always taken it for granted that the bigamy was moral only in so far as the Landgrave Philip refrained from conjugal infidelity

[1] Max Lenz, in "Philipps Briefwechsel," 1, p. 499.
[2] "Briefwechsel," *ibid.*, p. 368 f.
[3] Feige to the Landgrave, July 19, 1541, published by Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 331; cp. p. 100 f.
[4] No. 35, August 30, 1906.
[5] "Das politische Archiv des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen; Repertorium des landgräfl. polit. Archivs," Bd. 1. (Publikationen aus den Kgl. preuss. Staatsarchiven, Bd. 78). Year 1556, No. 27.

after its conclusion, and now we are confronted with this charge. Is it founded ?" Concerning this new document N. Paulus remarks : "In order to be able properly to appreciate its importance, we should have to know more of the suit. At any rate Margaret would not have caused representations to be made to her 'husband' concerning his infidelity without very weighty reasons."[1]

In the Landgrave's family great dissatisfaction continued to be felt with Luther. When, in 1575, Philip's son and successor, Landgrave William IV, was entertaining Palsgravine Elisabeth, a zealous friend of Lutheranism, he spoke to her about Luther, as she relates in a letter.[2] "He called Dr. Luther a rascal, because he had persuaded his father to take two wives, and generally made out Dr. Luther to be very wicked. Whereat I said that it could not be true that Luther had done such a thing." —So completely had the fact become shrouded in obscurity. William, however, fetched her the original of the Wittenberg testimony. Although she was unwilling to look at it lest her reverence for Luther should suffer, yet she was forced to hear it. In her own words : "He locked me in the room and there I had to remain ; he gave it me to read, and my husband [the Palsgrave Johann Casimir] who was also with me, and likewise a Zwinglian Doctor both abused Dr. Luther loudly and said we simply looked upon him as an idol and that he was our god. The Landgrave brought out the document and made the Doctor read it aloud so that I might hear it ; but I refused to listen to it and thought of something else ; seeing I refused to listen the Landgrave gave me a frightful scolding, but afterwards he was sorry and craved pardon."

There is no doubt that William's dislike for Luther, here displayed, played a part in his refusal to accept the formula of Concord in 1580.[3]

So meagre were the proofs made public of Luther's share in the step which Philip of Hesse had taken, that, even in Hesse, the Giessen professor Michael Siricius was able to declare in a writing of 1679, entitled "*Uxor una*," that Luther's supposed memorandum was an invention.[4]

Of the Wittenberg "advice" only one, fairly long, but quite apocryphal version, was put in circulation during

[1] Köln. Volksztng., 1906, No. 758.

[2] K. v. Weber, "Anna Churfürstin zu Sachsen," Leipzig, 1865, p. 401 f. Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 132 f.

[3] Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 133. William IV wrote a curious letter to Cœlestin on this "great book of discord and on the '*dilaceratio ecclesiarum*' " ; see G. Th. Strobel, "Beiträge zur Literatur, besonders des 16. Jahrh.," 2, 1786, p. 162.

[4] "*Theologos Witenbergenses et in specie Megalandrum nostrum Lutherum consilio suo id factum suasisse vel approbasse, manifeste falsum est.*" Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 134.

Melanchthon's lifetime ; it appeared in the work of Erasmus Sarcerius, "On the holy married state," of which the Preface is dated in 1553. It is so worded as to leave the reader under the impression that its authors had refused outright to give their consent. Out of caution, moreover, neither the authors nor the addressee are named.[1] In this version, supposed to be Luther's actual text, it was embodied, in 1661, in the Altenburg edition of his works, then in the Leipzig reprint of the same (1729 ff.) and again in Walch's edition (Halle, 1740 ff.).[2] Yet Lorenz Beger, in his work "*Daphnæus Arcuarius*" (1679), had supplied the real text, together with Bucer's instructions and the marriage contract, from "a prominent Imperial Chancery." The importance of these documents was first perceived in France. Bossuet used them in his "Histoire des variations des églises protestantes" (1688).[3] He was also aware that Landgrave Ernest, of Hesse-Rheinfels-Rotenburg, who returned to the Catholic Church in 1652, had supplied copies of the three documents (to Elector Carl Ludwig of the Palatine). In more recent times Max Lenz's publication of the Hessian archives has verified these documents and supplied a wealth of other material which we have duly utilised in the above.

Opinions Old and New Regarding the Bigamy.

As more light began to be thrown on the history of the bigamy, Protestant historians, even apart from those already mentioned, were not slow in expressing their strong condemnation, as indeed was only to be expected.

Julius Boehmer, in outspoken language, points to "the unfortunate fact" that "Luther, in his old age, became weak, nay, flabby in his moral judgments and allowed himself to be guided by political and diplomatic considerations, and not by truth alone and an uncorruptible conscience."[4]

Walter Köhler, in the "Historische Zeitschrift," has thrown a strong light on the person and the motives of the Landgrave.[5] Whilst admitting that Philip may have suffered from remorse

[1] Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 131.

[2] Altenburg ed., 8, p. 977 ; Leipzig ed., 22, p. 496 ; Walch's ed., 10, p. 886. (Cp. Walch, 10^2, p. 748.) See De Wette in his edition of Luther's Letters, 5, p. 236, and Enders-Kawerau, in "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 319.

[3] Page 221.

[4] "Luthers Werke für das deutsche Volk," 1907, Introd., p. xvi.

[5] Bd. 94, 1905, p. 385 ff.

of conscience and depression, he shows how these were "in great part due to his physical deterioration, his unrestrained excesses having brought on him syphilis in its worst form; sores broke out on his hands and he suffered from trouble with the throat." His resolution to commit bigamy also sprang from the same source, "not from a sudden realisation of the wickedness of his life, but simply from the sense of his physical bankruptcy." Besides, as Köhler points out, the Landgrave's intention was not at first to marry Margaret, but rather to maintain her as a kept woman and so render excesses unnecessary. Philip, however, was unable to get her as a concubine, owing to the opposition of her mother, who demanded for her daughter the rank of princess and wife. Hence the idea of a bigamy.

The following indignant reference of Onno Klopp's must be included amongst the Protestant statements, since it was written some time before the eminent historian joined the Catholic Church: "The revolting story has left a blot on the memory of Luther and Melanchthon which oceans of sophisms will not avail to wash away. This, more than any other deed, brought to light both the waywardness of the new Church and its entire dependence on the favour of Princes."[1]

As for the concealment, and the secrecy in which the sanction of the bigamy was shrouded, G. Ellinger considers, that the decision of Luther and his friends "became absolutely immoral only through the concealment enjoined by the reformers." In consequence of the matter being made a secret of conscience, "the second wife would seem to the world a concubine"; hence not only the first wife, but also the second would suffer degradation. The second wife's relatives had given their consent "only on the hypothesis of a real marriage"; this too was what Philip intended; yet Luther wished him to tell the Emperor that she was a mere concubine; the Landgrave, however, refused to break the word he had given, and "repudiated Luther's suggestion that he should tell a lie."[2]

Another Protestant, the historian Paul Tschackert, has recently characterised the Hessian affair as "a dirty story." "It is, and must remain," he says, "a shameful blot on the German Reformation and the life of our reformers. We do not wish to gloss it over, still less to excuse it."[3]

Yet, notably in modern theological literature, some Protestants have seemed anxious to palliate the affair. An attempt is made to place the Wittenberg advice and Luther's subsequent conduct in a more favourable light by emphasising more than heretofore the secrecy of the advice given,

[1] "Studien über Katholizismus, Protestantismus und Gewissensfreiheit in Deutschland," Schaffhausen, 1857 (anonymous), p. 104.

[2] "Phil. Melanchthon," pp. 378, 382.

[3] "Die Entstehung der lutherischen und reformierten Kirchenlehre," Göttingen, 1910, p. 271.

which Luther did not consider himself justified in revealing under any circumstances, and the publication of which the Landgrave was unjustly demanding. It is also urged, that the ecclesiastical influence of the Middle Ages played its part in Luther's sanction of the bigamy. One author even writes: "the determining factor may have been," that "at the critical moment the reformer made way for the priest and confessor"; elsewhere the same author says: "Thus the Reformation begins with a mediæval scene." Another Protestant theologian thinks that "the tendency, taken over from the Catholic Church," to treat the marriage prohibitions as aspects of the natural law was really responsible; in Luther's evangelical morality "there was a good lump of Romish morality, worthless quartz mingled with good metal"; "Catholic scruples" had dimmed Luther's judgment in the matter of polygamy; to us the idea of bigamy appears "simply monstrous," "but this is a result of age-long habits"; in the 16th century people thought "very differently."

In the face of the detailed quotations from actual sources already given in the present chapter, all such opinions—not merely Luther's own appeal to a "secret of confession," invented by himself—are seen to be utterly unhistorical. Particularly so is the reference to the Catholic Middle Ages. It was just the Middle Ages, and the ecclesiastical tradition of earlier times, which excited among Luther's contemporaries, even those of his own party, such opposition to the bigamy wherever news of the same penetrated in any shape or form.[1]

In the following we shall quote a few opinions of 16th-century Protestants not yet mentioned. With the historian their unanimous verdict must weigh more heavily in the scale than modern theories, which, other considerations apart, labour under the disadvantage of having been brought forward long after the event and the expressions of opinion which accompanied it, to bolster up views commonly held to-day.[2]

[1] That the death penalty for bigamy also dated from the Middle Ages need hardly be pointed out.

[2] For the proofs which follow we may refer to the selection made by N. Paulus ("Hist.-pol. Bl.," 147, 1911, p. 503 ff., 561 ff.) in the article "Die hessische Doppelehe im Urteile der protest. Zeitgenossen."

The bigamy was so strongly opposed to public opinion and thus presumably to the tradition handed down from the Middle Ages, that Nicholas von Amsdorf, Luther's friend, declared the step taken by Philip constituted "a mockery and insult to the Holy Gospel and a scandal to the whole of Christendom."[1] He thought as did Justus Jonas, who exclaimed: "Oh, what a great scandal!" and, "Who is not aghast at so great and calamitous a scandal?"[2] Erasmus Alber, preacher at Marburg, speaks of the "awful scandal" ("*immane scandalum*") which must result.[3] In a letter to the Landgrave in which the Hessian preacher, Anton Corvinus, fears a "great falling away" on account of the affair, he also says, that the world will not "in any way" hear of such a marriage being lawful; his only advice was: "Your Serene Highness must take the matter to heart and, on occasion, have recourse to lying."[4] To tell a deliberate untruth, as already explained (pp. 29, 53), appeared to other preachers likewise the only possible expedient with which to meet the universal reprobation of contemporaries who judged of the matter from their "mediæval" standpoint.

Justus Menius, the Thuringian preacher, in his work against polygamy mentioned above, appealed to the universal, Divine "prohibition which forbids and restrains us," a prohibition which applied equally to the "great ones" and allowed of no dispensation. He also pointed out the demoralising effect of a removal of the prohibition in individual cases and the cunning of the devil who wished thereby "to brand the beloved Evangel with infamy."[5]

Philip had defiled the Church with filth ("*fœdissime*"), so wrote Johann Brenz, the leader of the innovations in Würtemberg. After such an example he scarcely dared to raise his eyes in the presence of honourable women, seeing what an insult this was to them.[6]

Not to show how reprehensible was the deed, but merely to demonstrate anew how little ground there was for throwing the responsibility on the earlier ages of the Church, we may recall that the Elector, Johann Frederick of Saxony, on first learning of the project through Bucer, expressed his "horror," and two days later informed the Landgrave through Brück, that such a thing had been unheard of for ages and the law of the land and the tradition of the whole of Christendom were likewise against

[1] Amsdorf's "Bedenken," probably from the latter end of June, 1540, published by Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 324.

[2] "Briefwechsel des Jonas," 1, pp. 394, 396. Above, p. 27, n. 1. Further details in Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 562.

[3] Jonas, *ibid.*, p. 397.

[4] P. Tschackert, "Briefwechsel des Anton Corvinus," 1900, p. 79. Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 563.

[5] G. T. Schmidt, "Justus Menius über die Bigamie." ("Zeitschr. f. d. hist. Theol.," 38, 1868, p. 445 ff. More from it in Paulus, p. 565. Cp. Rockwell, *ibid.*, p. 126.)

[6] Th. Pressel, "*Anecdota Brentiana*," 1868, p. 210: "*Commaculavit ecclesiam temeritate sua fœdissime.*"

it. It is true that he allowed himself to be pacified and sent his representative to the wedding, but afterwards he again declared with disapproval, that the whole world, and all Christians without distinction, would declare the Emperor right should he interfere; he also instructed his minister at the Court of Dresden to deny that the Elector or the Wittenberg theologians had had any hand in the matter.[1] Other Princes and politicians belonging to the new faith left on record strong expressions of their disapproval; for instance: Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg, Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg, King Christian III of Denmark, the Strasburg statesman Jacob Sturm and the Augsburg ambassador David Dettigkofer.[2] To the latter the news "was frightful tidings from which would result great scandal, a hindrance to and a falling away from the Holy Evangel."[3]

All there now remains to do is to illustrate, by statements made by Protestants in earlier and more recent times, two important points connected with the Hessian episode; viz. the unhappy part which politics played in Luther's attitude, and what he said on lying. Here, again, during the last ten years there has been a movement in Luther's favour amongst many Protestant theologians.

Concerning the part of politics W. Rockwell, the historian of the bigamy, openly admits, that: "By his threat of seeking protection from the Emperor for his bigamy, Philip overcame the unwillingness of the Wittenbergers to grant the requested dispensation."[4] "It is clear," he also says, "that political pressure was brought to bear on the Wittenbergers by the Landgrave, and that to this pressure they yielded."[5]

That consideration for the effect his decision was likely to have on the attitude of the Landgrave weighed heavily in the balance with Luther in the matter of his "testimony," it is scarcely possible to deny, after what we have seen. "The Hessian may fall away from us" (above, p. 46), such was one of the fears which undoubtedly had something to do with his compliance. To inspire such fear was plainly the object of Philip's threat, that, should the Wittenbergers not prove amenable, he would make advances to the Emperor and the Pope, and the repeated allusions made by Luther and his friends to their dread of such a step, and of his falling away, show how his threat continued to ring in their ears.[6]

[1] Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 569 f. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 570 ff.
[3] Fr. Roth, "Augsburgs Reformationsgesch.," 3, 1907, p. 56.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 95. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 154. [6] See above, p. 18, 21 f., 46, 62 n. 2.

Bucer declared he had himself agreed to the bigamy from fear lest Philip should otherwise be lost to the Evangelical cause,[1] and his feelings were doubtless shared at Wittenberg. Melanchthon speaks not merely of a possible attempt on Philip's part to obtain the Emperor's sanction to his marriage, but of an actual threat to leave the party in the lurch.[2] Johann Brenz, as soon as news reached him in Würtemberg of the Landgrave's hint of an appeal to the Emperor, saw in it a threat to turn his back on the protesting party.[3] All three probably believed that at heart the Landgrave would remain true to the new faith, but what Luther had chiefly in view was Philip's position as head of the Schmalkalden League.

The result was all the more tragic. The compliance wrung from the Wittenbergers failed to protect the party from the evil they were so desirous of warding off. Philip's reconciliation with the Emperor, as already pointed out, was very detrimental to the Schmalkalden League, however insincere his motives may have been.

On this point G. Kawerau says:[4] "In the Landgrave's resolution to address himself to the Emperor and the Pope, of which they were informed, they [Luther and Melanchthon] saw a 'public scandal,' a '*publica offensio*,' which they sought to obviate by demanding absolute secrecy."[5] "But the disastrous political consequences did, in the event, make their appearance. . . . The zealously promoted alliance with François I, to which even the Saxon Elector was not averse, came to nothing and Denmark and Sweden's overtures had to be repelled. The prime-mover in the Schmalkalden League was himself obliged to cripple the League. 'The dreaded champion of the Evangel became the tool of the Imperial policy' (v. Bezold). From that time forward his position lacked precision and his strong initiative was gone."

G. Ellinger, in his study on Melanchthon, writes: "It can scarcely be gainsaid that Luther and Melanchthon allowed themselves in a moment of weakness to be influenced by the weight of these considerations." The petition, he explains, had been

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 475. Cp. Kolde, "Luther," 2, p. 489, and "RE. für prot. Theol.," 15^3, p. 310.

[2] "*Defectionem etiam minitabatur, si nos consulere ei nollemus.*" To Camerarius, Aug. 24, 1540, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 1079. Cp. p. 863. Above, p. 62.

[3] "*Hoc fere tantumdem est ac si minatus esset, se ab Evangelio defecturum.*" Pressel, p. 211.

[4] Möller, "Lehrb. der KG.," 3^3, p. 146 f.

[5] The scandal lay rather elsewhere. According to Kawerau Luther's "principal motive was his desire to save the Landgrave's soul by means of an expedient, which, though it did not correspond with the perfect idea of marriage, was not directly forbidden by God, and in certain circumstances had even been permitted. The questionable nature of this advice is, however, evident," etc.

warmly urged upon the Wittenbergers from a political point of view by Bucer, the intermediary. "If Bucer showed himself favourable to the Landgrave's views this was due to his wish to preserve thereby the Evangelical cause from the loss of its most doughty champion; for Philip had told him in confidence, that, in the event of the Wittenbergers and the Saxon Electorate refusing their consent, he intended to address himself directly to the Emperor and the Pope in order to obtain sanction for his bigamy." The Landgrave already, in the summer of 1534, had entertained the idea of approaching the Emperor, and in the spring of 1535 had made proposals to this end. "It can hardly be doubted that in Bucer's case political reasons turned the scale." Ellinger refers both to the admission made by Melanchthon and to the significant warning against the Emperor with which the letter of Dispensation closes.[1]

The strongest reprobation of the evil influence exerted over Luther by politics comes, however, from Adolf Hausrath.[2] He makes it clear, that, at Wittenberg, they were aware that Protestantism "would assume quite another aspect were the mighty Protestant leader to go over to the Pope or the Emperor"; never has "the demoralising character of all politics" been more shamefully revealed; "eternal principles were sacrificed to the needs of the moment"; "Philip had to be retained at any cost." Hence came the "great moral defeat" and Luther's "fall."

This indignant language on the part of the Heidelberg historian of the Church has recently been described by a learned theologian on the Protestant side as both "offensive" and uncalled for. Considering Luther's bold character it is surely very improbable, that an attempt to intimidate him would have had any effect except "to arouse his spirit of defiance"; not under the influence of mere "opportunism" did he act, but, rather, after having, as a confessor, heard "the cry of deep distress" he sought to come to "the aid of a suffering conscience."—In answer to this we must refer the reader to what has gone before, where this view, which seems a favourite with some moderns, has already sufficiently been dealt with. It need only be added, that the learned author says of the bigamy, that "a fatal blunder" was made by Luther . . . but only because the mediæval confessor intervened. "The reformer was not able in every season and situation to assert the new religious principle which we owe to him; hence we have merely one of many instances of failure, though one that may well be termed grotesque and is scarcely to be matched." "Nothing

[1] "Phil. Melanchthon," pp. 378, 382.
[2] "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 393 ff.

did more to hinder the triumphal progress of the Reformation than the Landgrave's 'Turkish marriage.'" As to the argument drawn from Luther's boldness and defiance, a Protestant has pointed out, that we are not compelled to regard any compliance from motives of policy as "absolutely precluded"; to say that "political expediency played no part whatever in Luther's case" is "going a little too far." "Did then Luther never allow any room to political considerations? Even, for instance, in the question of armed resistance to the Emperor?"[1]

Referring to Luther's notorious utterance on lying, G. Ellinger, the Protestant biographer of Melanchthon, says: Luther's readiness to deny what had taken place is "one of the most unpleasing episodes in his life and bears sad testimony to the frailty of human nature." His statements at the Eisenach Conference "show how even a great man was driven from the path of rectitude by the blending of politics with religion. He advised a 'good, downright lie' that the world might be saved from a scandal. . . . It is sad to see a great man thus led astray, though at the same time we must remember, that, from the very start, the whole transaction had been falsified by the proposal to conceal it."[2]

Th. Kolde says in a similar strain, in a work which is otherwise decidedly favourable to Luther, "Greater offence than that given by the 'advice' itself is given by the attitude which the reformers took up towards it at a later date."[3]

"The most immoral part of the whole business," so Frederick von Bezold says in his "Geschichte der deutschen Reformation," "lay in the advice given by the theologians that the world should be imposed upon. . . . A man [Luther] who once had been determined to sacrifice himself and the whole world rather than the truth, is now satisfied with a petty justification for his falling away from his own principles."[4] And, to conclude with the most recent biographer of Luther, Adolf Hausrath thus criticises the invitation to tell a "downright lie": "It is indeed sad to

[1] O. Clemen, "Zeitschr. f. KG.," 30, 1909, p. 389 f. Cp. the views of the Protestant historians, K. Wenck, H. Virck and W. Köhler, adduced by Paulus (*loc. cit.*, p. 515), who all admit the working of political pressure.

[2] "Phil. Melanchthon," pp. 382, 383. [3] Bd., 2, p. 488 f.

[4] Page 736.

see the position into which the ecclesiastical leaders had brought themselves, and how, with devilish logic, one false step induced them to take another which was yet worse."[1]

This notwithstanding, the following opinion of a defender of Luther (1909) has not failed to find supporters in the Protestant world: "The number of those who in the reformation-period had already outgrown the lax mediæval view regarding the requirements of the love of truth was probably not very great. One man, however, towers in this respect above all his contemporaries, viz. Luther. He it was who first taught us what truthfulness really is. The Catholic Church, which repudiated his teaching, knows it not even to this day." "A truthfulness which disregards all else," nay, a "positive horror for all duplicity" is, according to this writer, the distinguishing mark of Luther's life.

[1] "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 403.

CHAPTER XXII

LUTHER AND LYING

1. A Battery of Assertions.[1]

Luther's frank admission of his readiness to make use of a "good big lie" in the complications consequent on Philip's bigamy, and his invitation to the Landgrave to escape from the dilemma in this way, may serve as a plea for the present chapter. "What harm is there," he asks, "if, in a good cause and for the sake of the Christian Churches, a man tells a good, downright lie?" "A lie of necessity, of convenience, or of excuse, all such lies are not against God and for such He will Himself answer"; "that the Landgrave was unable to lie strongly, didn't matter in the least."[2]

It is worth while ascertaining how Luther—who has so often been represented as the embodiment of German integrity and uprightness—behaved in general as regards the obligation of speaking with truth and honesty. Quite recently a Protestant author, writing with the sole object of exonerating his hero in this particular, bestowed on him the title of "Luther the Truthful." "Only in one single instance," so he has it, "did Luther advise the use of a lie of necessity at which exception might be taken." In order not to run to the opposite extreme and make mountains out of mole-hills we shall do well to bear in mind how great was the temptation, during so titanic a struggle as his, for Luther to ignore at times the rigorous demands of truth and justice, particularly when he saw his opponents occasionally making light of them. We must likewise take into consideration the vividness of Luther's imagination, the

[1] The larger portion of the present chapter appeared as an article in the "Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.," 29, 1905, p. 417 ff.

[2] See above, p. 51.

strength of the ideas which dominated him, his tendency to exaggeration and other mitigating circumstances.

There was a time when Luther's foes were ready to describe as lies every false statement or erroneous quotation made by Luther, as though involuntary errors and mistakes due to forgetfulness were not liable to creep into his works, written as they were in great haste.

On the other hand, some of Luther's admirers are ready enough to make admissions such as the following: "In point of fact we find Luther holding opinions concerning truthfulness which are not shared by every Christian, not even by every evangelical Christian." "Luther unhesitatingly taught that there might be occasions when it was a Christian's duty to depart from the truth."[1]

To this we must, however, add that Luther, repeatedly and with the utmost decision, urged the claims of truthfulness, branded lying as "the devil's own image,"[2] and extolled as one of the excellencies of the Germans—in which they differed from Italians and Greeks—their reputation for ever being "loyal, truthful and reliable people"; he also adds—and the words do him credit—"To my mind there is no more shameful vice on earth than lying."[3]

This, however, does not dispense us from the duty of carefully examining the particular instances which seem to militate against the opinion here expressed.

We find Luther's relations with truth very strained even at the beginning of his career, and that, too, in the most important and momentous explanations he gave of his attitude towards the Church and the Pope. Frequently enough, by simply placing his statements side by side, striking falsehoods and evasions become apparent.[4]

For instance, according to his own statements made in private, he is determined to assail the Pope as Antichrist, yet at the same time, in his official writings, he declares any thought of hostility towards the Pope to be alien to him. It is only necessary to note the dates: On March 13, 1519, he tells his friend Spalatin that he is wading through the Papal Decretals and, in confidence, must admit his uncertainty as to whether the Pope is Antichrist or merely his Apostle, so miserably had Christ, i.e. the truth, been crucified by him in the

[1] W. Walther, "Theol. Literaturblatt," 1904, No. 35. Cp. Walther, "Für Luther," p. 425 ff.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 9^2, p. 306. [3] *Ibid.*, 39, p. 356.

[4] Fuller proofs will be found scattered throughout our earlier volumes.

Decretals.[1] Indeed, even in the earlier half of Dec., 1518, he had been wondering whether the Pope was not Antichrist; on Dec. 11, writing to his friend Link, he said he had a suspicion, that the "real Antichrist" of whom Paul speaks ruled at the Court of Rome, and believed that he could prove that he was "even worse than the Turk."[2] In a similar strain he wrote as early as Jan. 13, 1519, that he intended to fight the "Roman serpent" should the Elector and the University of Wittenberg allow him so to do;[3] on Feb. 3,[4] and again on Feb. 20, 1519,[5] he admits that it had already "long" been his intention to declare war on Rome and its falsifications of the truth.—In spite of all this, at the beginning of Jan., 1519, he informed the Papal agent Miltitz that he was quite ready to send a humble and submissive letter to the Pope, and, as a matter of fact, on Jan. 5 (or 6), 1519, he wrote that strange epistle to Leo X in which he speaks of himself as "the dregs of humanity" in the presence of the Pope's "sublime majesty"; he approaches him like a "lambkin," whose bleating he begs the Vicar of Christ graciously to give ear to. Nor was all this merely said in derision, but with a fixed purpose to deceive. He declares with the utmost solemnity "before God and every creature" that it had never entered his mind to assail in any way the authority of the Roman Church and the Pope; on the contrary, he "entirely admits that the power of the Church extends over all, and that nothing in heaven or on earth is to be preferred to her, except Jesus Christ alone, the Lord of all things." The original letter still exists, but the letter itself was never despatched, probably because Miltitz raised some objection.[6] Only through mere chance did the Papal Curia fail to receive this letter, which, compared with Luther's real thought as elsewhere expressed, can only be described as outrageous.[7]

In his dealings with his Bishop, Hieronymus Scultetus the chief pastor of Brandenburg, he had already displayed a like duplicity.

[1] "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 450. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 316.
[3] To Christoph Scheurl, *ibid.*, p. 348.
[4] To Johann Lang, *ibid.*, p. 410.
[5] To Willibald Pirkheimer, *ibid.*, p. 436.
[6] "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 444. Concerning the date and the keeping back of the letter, see Brieger, "Zeitschr. für KG.," 15, 1895, p. 204 f.
[7] Strange to say, this document has not been taken into consideration by G. Sodeur, in "Luther und die Lüge, eine Schutzschrift" (Leipzig, 1904). In the same way other sources throwing light on Luther's attitude towards lying have been passed over. That his object, viz. Luther's vindication, is apparent throughout, is perhaps only natural. How far this object is attained the reader may see from a comparison of our material and results with those of the "Schutzschrift." The same holds of W. Walther's efforts on Luther's behalf in his art. "Luther und die Lüge," and in his "Für Luther." See above, p. 81, n. 1. See also N. Paulus, "Zu Luthers Doppelzüngigkeit" ("Beil. zur Augsburger Postztng.," 1904, No. 33); "Hist. Jahrb.," 26, 1905, p. 168 f.; "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 1905, 135, 323 ff.; "Wissenschaftl. Beil. zur Germania," 1904, Nos. 33, 35.

In May, 1518, he wrote assuring him in the most respectful terms, that he submitted unconditionally to the judgment of the Church whatever he was advancing concerning Indulgences and kindred subjects; that the Bishop was to burn all his scribbles (Theses and Resolutions) should they displease him, and that he would "not mind in the least."[1]—And yet a confidential letter sent three months earlier to his friend Spalatin mentions, though for the benefit of him "alone and our friends," that the whole system of Indulgences now seemed to Luther a "deluding of souls, good only to promote spiritual laziness."[2]

To the Emperor too he also gives assurances couched in submissive and peaceful language, which are in marked contrast with other statements which emanated from him about the same time.

It is only necessary to recall his letter of Aug. 30, 1520, to Charles V.[3] Here Luther seeks to convince the Emperor that he is the quietest and most docile of theologians; who was "forced to write only owing to the snares laid for him by others"; who wished for nothing more than to be ignored and left in peace; and who was ready at any moment to welcome the instruction which so far had been refused him.—Very different was his language a few weeks earlier when writing to Spalatin, his tool at the Electoral Court of Saxony: "The die is cast; the despicable fury or favour of the Romans is nothing to me; I desire no reconciliation or communion with them. . . . I shall burn the whole of the Papal Laws and all humility and friendliness shall cease."[4] He even hopes, with the help of Spalatin and the Elector, to send to Rome the ominous tidings of the offer made by the Knight Silvester von Schauenburg to protect him by armed force; they might then see at Rome "that their thunders are of no avail"; should they, however, obtain from the Elector his dismissal from his chair at Wittenberg, then, "with the support of the men-at-arms, he would make things still warmer for the Romans."[5] And yet, on the other hand, Luther was just then most anxious that Spalatin, by means of the Elector, should represent his cause everywhere, and particularly at Rome, as not yet defined, as a point of controversy urgently calling for examination or, at the very least, for a biblical refutation before the Emperor and the Church; the Sovereign also was to tell the Romans that "violence and censures would only make the case of Germany worse even than that of Bohemia," and would lead to "irrepressible tumults." In such wise, by dint of dishonest diplomacy, did he seek to frighten, as he says, the "timid Romanists" and thus prevent their taking any steps against him.[6]

If we go back a little further we find a real and irreconcilable discrepancy between the actual events of the Indulgence contro-

[1] On May 22, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 149.
[2] On Feb. 15, 1518, *ibid.*, p. 155.
[3] "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 469.
[4] July 10, 1520, *ibid.*, p. 432.
[5] *Ibid.*, Schauenburg's letter, *ibid.*, p. 415.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 433.

versy of 1517 and 1518 and the accounts which he himself gave of them later.

"I was forced to accept the degree of Doctor and to swear to preach and teach my cherished Scriptures truly and faithfully. But then the Papacy barred my way and sought to prevent me from teaching."[1] "While I was looking for a blessing from Rome, there came instead a storm of thunder and lightning; I was made the lamb that fouled the water for the wolf; Detzel escaped scot-free, but I was to be devoured."[2]

His falsehoods about Tetzel are scarcely believable. The latter was, so he says, such a criminal that he had even been condemned to death.[3]

The Indulgence-preachers had declared (what they never thought of doing) "that it was not necessary to have remorse and sorrow in order to obtain the indulgence."[4] In his old age Luther stated that Tetzel had even given Indulgences for future sins. It is true, however, that when he spoke "he had already become a myth to himself" (A. Hausrath). "Not only are the dates wrong but even the events themselves. . . . It is the same with the statement that Tetzel had sold Indulgences for sins not yet committed. . . . In Luther's charges against Tetzel in the controversy on the Theses we hear nothing of this; only in the work 'Wider Hans Worst' (1541), written in his old age, does he make such an assertion."[5] In this tract Luther does indeed make Tetzel teach that "there was no need of remorse, sorrow or repentance for sin, provided one bought an indulgence, or an indulgence-letter." He adds: "And he [Tetzel] also sold for future sins." (See vol. i., p. 342.)

This untruth, clearly confuted as it was by facts, passed from Luther's lips to those of his disciples. Mathesius in his first sermon on Luther seems to be drawing on the passage in "Wider Hans Worst" when he says, Tetzel had preached that he was able to forgive the biggest past "as well as future sins."[6] Luther's friend, Frederick Myconius, helped to spread the same falsehood throughout Germany by embodying it in his "*Historia Reformationis*" (1542),[7] whilst in Switzerland, Henry Bullinger, who also promoted it, expressly refers to "Wider Hans Worst" as his authority.[8]

In this way Luther's misrepresentations infected his whole circle, nor can we be surprised if in this, as in so many similar instances, the falsehood has held the field even to our own day.[9]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 386; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 87.
[2] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 72. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 70, 68 f.
[4] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 284; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 367. On indulgences for the departed, see our vol. i., p. 344.
[5] Hausrath, "Luthers Leben," 2, 1904, p. 432.
[6] Historien (1566), p. 11. [7] Ed. Cyprian., p. 20.
[8] "Reformationsgesch. von H. Bullinger," ed. Hottinger u. Vögeli, 1, 1838, p. 19.
[9] One such tale put in circulation by the Lutherans in the 16th century has been dealt with by N. Paulus in "Gibt es Ablässe für zukünftige Sünden?" ("Lit. Beil. der Köln. Volksztng.," 1905, No. 43.)

We may mention incidentally, that Luther declares concerning the fame which his printed "Propositions against Tetzel's Articles" brought him: "It did not please me, for, as I said, I myself did not know what the Indulgence was,"[1] although his first sermons are a refutation, both of his own professed ignorance and of that which he also attributes "to all theologians generally." —Finally, Luther was very fond of intentionally representing the Indulgence controversy as the one source of his opposition to the Church, and in this he was so successful that many still believe it in our own times. The fact that, long before 1517, his views on Grace and Justification had alienated him from the teaching of the Church, he keeps altogether in the background.

At length the Church intervened with the Ban and Luther was summoned before the Emperor at the Diet of Worms. Three years later, at the cost of truth, he had already contrived to cast a halo of glory around his public appearance there. For instance, we know how, contrary to the true state of the case, he wrote: "I went to Worms although I knew that the safe conduct given me by the Emperor would be broken"; for the German Princes, otherwise so staunch and true, had, he says, learned nothing better from the Roman idol than to disregard their plighted word; when he entered Worms he had "taken a jump into the gaping jaws of the monster Behemoth."[2] Yet he knew well enough that the promise of a safe conduct was to be kept most conscientiously. Only on the return journey did he express the fear lest, by preaching in defiance of the prohibition, he might make people say that he had thereby forfeited his safe conduct.[3]

Yet again it was no tribute to truth and probity, when, after the arrival in Germany of the Bull of Excommunication, though perfectly aware that it was genuine, he nevertheless feigned in print to regard it as a forgery concocted by his enemies, to the detriment of the Evangel. In confidence

Here, in view of some modern misapprehensions of the so-called Confession and Indulgence letters, he says: "They referred to future sins, only inasmuch as they authorised those who obtained them to select a confessor at their own discretion for their subsequent sins, and promised an Indulgence later, provided the sins committed had been humbly confessed. In this sense even our modern Indulgences promised for the future may be said to refer to future sins."

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 71.

[2] To Count Sebastian Schlick, July 15, 1522, "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 385 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 433).

[3] To Count Albert of Mansfeld, from Eisenach, May 9, 1521, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 74 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 144).

he declared that he "believed the Bull to be real and authentic,"[1] and yet at that very time, in his "Von den newen Eckischenn Bullen und Lugen," he brought forward four reasons for its being a forgery, and strove to make out that the document was, not the work of the Pope, but a "tissue of lies" woven by Eck.[2]

His tactics had been the same in the case of an edict directed against him by the Bishop of Meissen, the first of the German episcopate to take action. He knew very well that the enactment was genuine. Yet he wrote in reply the "Antwort auff die Tzedel sso unter des Officials tzu Stolpen Sigel ist aussgangen," as though the writer were some unknown opponent, who . . . "had lost his wits on the Gecksberg."[3]

A similar artifice was made to serve his purpose in the matter of the Papal Brief of Aug. 23, 1518, in which Cardinal Cajetan received full powers to proceed against him. He insisted that this was a malicious fabrication of his foes in Germany; and yet he was well aware of the facts of the case; he cannot have doubted its authenticity, seeing that the Brief had been officially transmitted to him from the Saxon Court through Spalatin.[4]

While, however, accusing others of deception, even occasionally by name, as in Eck's case, he saw no wrong in antedating his letter to Leo X; for this neither he nor his adviser Miltitz was to be called to account; it sufficed that by dating it earlier the letter appeared to have been written in ignorance of the Excommunication, and thereby served Luther's interests better.[5]

In fact, right through the period previous to his open breach with Rome, we see him ever labouring to postpone the decision, though a great gulf already separated him from the Church of yore. Across the phantom bridge which still spanned the chasm, he saw with satisfaction thousands passing into his own camp. When on the very point of

[1] To Spalatin, (11) October, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 491: "*credo veram et propriam esse bullam.*"

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 592; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 29 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 138=27, p. 80, in February, 1520.

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, pp. 214, 759.

[5] The letter was written after Oct. 13, 1520, but is dated Sep. 6, the Excommunication having been published on Sep. 21. Cp. Miltitz to the Elector of Saxony, Oct. 14, 1520, in Enders, "Briefwechsel Luthers," 2, p. 495, n. 3.

raising the standard of revolt he seemed at pains to prove it anything but an emblem of uprightness, probity and truth.

Passing now to the struggle of his later life, similar phenomena can scarcely escape the eyes of the unprejudiced observer.

He was proposing untruth and deception when, in 1520, he advised candidates to qualify for major Orders by a fictitious vow of celibacy. Whoever was to be ordained subdeacon was to urge the Bishop not to demand continency, but should the Bishop insist upon the law and call for such a promise, then the candidates were quietly to give it with the proviso: "*quantum fragilitas humana permittit*"; then, says Luther, "each one is free to take these words in a negative sense, i.e. I do not vow chastity because human frailty does not allow of a man living chastely."[1]

To what lengths he was prepared to go, even where members of Reformed sects were concerned, may be seen in one of his many unjust outbursts against Zwingli and Œcolampadius. Although they were suffering injustice and violence, yet he denounced them mercilessly. They were to be proclaimed "damned," even though this led to "violence being offered them"; this was the best way to make people shrink from their false doctrines.[2] His own doctrines, on the other hand, he says, are such that not even Catholics dared to condemn them. On his return to Wittenberg from the Coburg he preached, that the Papists had been forced to admit that his doctrine did not offend against a single article of the Faith.[3]—Of Carlstadt, his theological child of trouble, he asserted, that he wished to play the part of teacher of Holy Scripture though he had never in all his life even seen the Bible,[4] and yet all, Luther inclusive, knew that Carlstadt was not so ignorant of the Bible and that he could even boast of a considerable acquaintance with Hebrew. Concerning Luther's persecution of Carlstadt, a Protestant researcher has pointed to the "ever-recurring

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 441 f.; Erl. ed., 21, p. 323 f.

[2] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 279: "It was much better and safer to declare them damned than saved."

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 32, 1906, p. 133, sermons here printed for the first time.

[4] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 240.

flood of misrepresentations, suspicions, vituperation and abuse which the Reformer poured upon his opponent."[1]

Such being his licence of speech, what treatment could Catholics expect at his hands? One instance is to be found in the use he makes against the Catholics of a well-known passage of St. Bernard's.

St. Bernard, says Luther, had declared the religious life to be worthless and had said: "*Perdite vixi*" ("I have shamefully wasted my life"). The great Saint of the religious life, the noblest patron and representative of the virtues of the cloister, Luther depicts as condemning with these words the religious life in general as an abominable error; he would have him brand his own life and his attention to his vows, as an existence foreign to God which he had too late recognised as such! By this statement, says Luther, he "hung up his cowl on the nail," and proceeds to explain his meaning: "Henceforward he cared not a bit for the cowl and its foolery and refused to hear any more about it."[2] Thus, so Luther assures us, St. Bernard, at the solemn moment of quitting this world, "made nothing" ("*nihili fecit*") of his vows.[3]

When quoting the words "*Perdite vixi*" Luther frequently seeks to convey an admission on the Saint's part of his having come at last to see that the religious life was a mistake, and merely led people to forget Christ's merits; that he had at last attained the perception during sickness and had laid hold on Christ's merits as his only hope.[4] Even on internal grounds it is too much to assume Luther to have been in good faith, or merely guilty of a lapse of memory. That we have here to do with a distorted version of a perfectly harmless remark is proved to the historian by another passage, dating from the year 1518, where Luther himself refers quite simply and truly to the actual words employed by St. Bernard and sees in them merely an expression of humility and the admission of a pure heart, which detested the smallest of its faults.[5]

Denifle has followed up the "*Perdite vixi*" with great acumen, shown the frequent use Luther made of it and traced the words to their actual context in St. Bernard's writings. The text does not contain the faintest condemnation of the religious life, so that Luther's incessant misuse of it becomes only the more incomprehensible.[6]

[1] Barge, "Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt," 2, p. 223.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 47, p. 37 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 8, p. 658; "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 360.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 601=p. 278.
[5] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 323=1, p. 338; 1, p. 534=2, p. 142.
[6] Denifle, "Luther," 1², p. 44. Denifle has shown that the passage in question occurs in the form of a prayer in St. Bernard's "Sermo XX in Cantica" "P.L.," 183, col. 867: "*De mea misera vita suscipe* (*Deus*), *obsecro, residuum annorum meorum; pro his vero* (*annis*) *quos*

St. Bernard is here speaking solely of his own faults and imperfections, not at all of the religious life or of the vows. Nor were the words uttered on his death-bed, when face to face with eternity, but occur in a sermon preached in the full vigour of manhood and when the Saint was eagerly pursuing his monastic ideal.

Again, what things were not circulated by Luther, in the stress of his warfare, concerning the history of the Popes and the Church? Here, again, some of his statements were not simply errors made in good faith, but, as has been pointed out by Protestant historians, malicious inventions going far beyond the matter contained in the sources which we know to have been at his command. The Popes "poisoned several Emperors, beheaded or otherwise betrayed others and put them to death, as became the diabolical spectre of the Papacy."[1] The bloodthirsty Popes were desirous of "slaying the German Emperors, as Clement IV did with Conradin, the last Duke of Suabia and hereditary King of Naples, whom he caused to be publicly put to death by the sword."[2] Of this E. Schäfer rightly says, that the historian Sabellicus, whom Luther was utilising, simply (and truly) records that: "Conradin was taken while attempting to escape and was put to death by order of Charles [of Anjou]"; Clement IV Sabellicus does not mention at all, although it is true that the Pope was a strong opponent of the Staufen house.[3]

The so-called letter of St. Ulrich of Augsburg against clerical celibacy, with the account of 3000 (6000) babies' heads found in a pond belonging to St. Gregory's nunnery in Rome, is admittedly one of the most impudent forgeries found in history and emanated from some foe of Gregory VII and opponent of the ancient law of celibacy. Luther brought it out as a weapon in his struggle against celibacy, and, according to Köstlin-Kawerau, most probably the Preface to the printed text published at Wittenberg in 1520

vivendo perdidi, quia perdite vixi, cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non despicias. Dies mei sicut umbra declinaverunt et præterierunt sine fructu. Impossibile est, ut revocem; placeat, ut recogitem tibi eos in amaritudine animæ meæ." Denifle points out that the sermon in question was preached about 1136 or 1137, about sixteen years before Bernard's death, thus certainly not in his last illness.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 249. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 145; cp. p. 204.

[3] "Luther als Kirchenhistoriker," Gütersloh, 1897, p. 391, referring to Sabellicus, "Rhapsod. hist. Ennead.," 9, 8.

came from his pen.[1] The manuscript had been sent to Luther from Holland. Emser took him to task and proved the forgery, though on not very substantial grounds. Luther demurred to one of his arguments but declared that he did not build merely on a doubtful letter. In spite of this, however, the seditious and alluring fable was not only not withdrawn from circulation but actually reprinted. When Luther said later that celibacy had first been introduced in the time of St. Ulrich, he is again speaking on the authority of the supposititious letter. This letter was also worked for all it was worth by those who later took up the defence of Luther's teaching.[2]

To take one single example of Luther's waywardness in speaking of Popes who were almost contemporaries: He tells us with the utmost assurance that Alexander VI had been an "unbelieving Marane." However much we may execrate the memory of the Borgia Pope, still so extraordinary an assertion has never been made by any sensible historian. Alexander VI, the pretended Jewish convert and "infidel" on the Papal throne! Who could read his heart so well as to detect an infidelity, which, needless to say, he never acknowledged? Who can credit the tale of his being a Marane?

When, in July 14, 1537, Pope Paul III issued a Bull granting an indulgence for the war against the Turks, Luther at once published it with misleading notes in which he sought to show that the Popes, instead of linking up the Christian powers against their foes, had ever done their best to promote dissensions amongst the great monarchs of Christendom.[3]

In 1538 he sent to the press his Schmalkalden "Artickel" against the Pope and the prospective Council, adding observations of a questionable character regarding their

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 766, p. 350, n. 1. For the literature dealing with the Ulrich fable, see N. Paulus, "Die Dominikaner im Kampfe gegen Luther," p. 253; and particularly J. Haussleiter, "Beiträge zur bayerischen KG.," 6, p. 121 f.

[2] Cp. Mathesius, "Historien," p. 40, and Flacius Illyricus in his two separate editions of the letter. Flacius also incorporated the Ulrich letter in his "Catalogus testium veritatis" and repeatedly referred to it in his controversial writings. See J. Niemöller's article on the mendacity of a certain class of historical literature in the 16th century, "Flacius und Flacianismus" ("Zeitschr. f. kath. Theol.," 12, 1888, pp. 75–115, particularly p. 107 f.).

[3] Cp. Knaake, "Zeitschr. für luth. Theol.," 1876, p. 362.

history and meaning. He certainly was exalting unduly the Articles when he declared in the Introduction, that "they have been unanimously accepted and approved by our people." It is a matter of common knowledge, that, owing to Melanchthon's machinations, they had never even been discussed. (See vol. iii., p. 434.) They were nevertheless published as though they had been the official scheme drafted for presentation to the Council. Luther also put into the printed Artickel words which are not to be found in the original.[1] The following excuse of his statement as to their having been accepted at Schmalkalden has been made: "It is evident, that, owing to his grave illness at Schmalkalden, he never learnt the exact fate of his Articles." Yet who can believe, that, after his recovery, he did not make enquiries into what had become of the Articles on which he laid so much weight, or that he "never learnt" their fate, though the matter was one well known to both the Princes and the theologians? Only after his death were these Articles embodied in the official Confessions.[2]

Seeing that he was ready to misrepresent even the official proceedings of his own party, we cannot be surprised if, in his controversies, he was careless about the truth where the person of an opponent was concerned. Here it is not always possible to find even a shadow of excuse behind which he can take refuge. Of Erasmus's end he had received accounts from two quarters, both friendly to his cause, but they did not strike him as sufficiently damning. Accordingly he at once set in currency reports concerning the scholar's death utterly at variance with what he had learnt from the letters in question.[3] He accused the Catholics, particularly the Catholic Princes, of attempting to murder him, and frequently speaks of the hired braves sent out against him. Nor were his friends and pupils slow to take his words literally and to hurl such charges, more particularly against Duke George of Saxony.[4] Yet not a single attempt on his life can be proved, and even Protestants have admitted concerning the Duke that "nothing credible is known of

[1] Cp. Kolde on Luther's "private print," in Müller, "Bekenntnisschriften"[10], p. xxvi., n. 1.

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 397 f.

[3] For proofs from Luther's correspondence, vol. xi., see the article of N. Paulus in the "Lit. Beil. der Köln. Volksztng.," 1908, p. 226. On Erasmus, see below, p. 93.

[4] "Ratzebergers Chronik," ed. Neudecker, p. 69 f.

any attempt on George's part to assassinate Luther."[1] Cochlæus merely relates that murderers had offered their services to Duke George ;[2] beyond that nothing.

Far more serious than such misrepresenting of individuals was the injustice he did to the whole ecclesiastical life of the Middle Ages, which he would fain have made out to have entirely fallen away from the true standard of Christian faith and practice. Seen through his new glasses, mediæval life was distorted beyond all recognition. Walter Köhler gives a warning which is to the point : " Protestant historians must beware of looking at the Middle Ages from Luther's standpoint."[3] In particular was mediæval Scholasticism selected by Luther and his friends as a butt for attack and misrepresentation. Bucer admits in a letter to Bullinger how far they had gone in this respect : " We have treated all the Schoolmen in such a way as to shock many good and worthy men, who see that we have not read their works but are merely anxious to slander them out of prudence."[4]

However desirous we may be of crediting the later Luther with good faith in his distorted views of Catholic practices and doctrines, still he frequently goes so far in this respect as to make it extremely difficult to believe that his misrepresentations were based on mere error or actual conviction. One would have thought that he would at least have noticed the blatant contrast between his insinuations and the text of the Breviary and Missal—books with which he was thoroughly conversant—and even of the rule of his Order. As a monk and priest he was perfectly familiar with them ; only at the cost of a violent wrench could he have passed from this so different theological world to think as he ultimately did of the doctrines of Catholicism. Döllinger was quite right when he wrote : " As a controversialist Luther combined undeniably dialectic and rhetorical talent with a degree of unscrupulousness such as is rarely met with in this domain. One of his most ordinary methods was to distort a doctrine or institution into a mere caricature of itself, and then, forgetful of

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 662, p. 307, n. 1.
[2] Joh. Karl Seidemann, " Beiträge zur RG.," 1845 ff., p. 137.
[3] " Katholizismus und Reformation," p. 45.
[4] Letter to Bullinger, 1535, " Corp. ref.," 10, p. 138.

the fact that what he was fighting was a simple creation of his fancy, to launch out into righteous abuse of it. . . . So soon as he touches a theological question, he confuses it, often of set purpose, and as for the reasons of his opponents, they are mutilated and distorted out of all recognition."[1] The untruthfulness of his polemics is peculiarly apparent in his attack on free-will. It is impossible, even with the best of intentions, to put it all, or practically all, to the account " of the method of disputation " then in use. That method, the syllogistic one, called for a clear and accurate statement of the opponent's standpoint. The controversy round "*De servo arbitrio*" (fully dealt with in vol. ii., pp. 223–294) has recently been studied by two scholars, one a Protestant, the other a Catholic, and both authors on the whole agree at least on one point, viz. that Luther ascribed to his opponent a denial of the necessity of Grace, such as the latter never defended, and such as is quite unknown to Catholics.[2] Indeed, at a later juncture in that same controversy Luther even declared of the author of the "*Hyperaspistes*" that he denied the Trinity![3]

Instead of instancing anew all the many minor misrepresentations of the dogmas and practices of the older Church for which Luther was responsible, and which are found scattered throughout this work, we may confine ourselves to recalling his bold assertion, that all earlier expositors had taken the passage concerning " God's justice," in Rom. i. 17, as referring to punitive justice.[4] This was what

[1] " Luther, eine Skizze," p. 56 f.; " KL.," 8^2, col. 342 f.

[2] K. Zickendraht, " Der Streit zwischen Erasmus und Luther über die Willensfreiheit," Leipzig, 1909, admits at least concerning some of Luther's assertions in the "*De servo arbitrio*," that " he was led away by the wish to draw wrong inferences from his opponent's premises "; for instance, in asserting that Erasmus " outdid the Pelagians "; by reading much into Erasmus which was not there he brought charges against him which are " manifestly false " (p. 81). Luther sought " to transplant the seed sown by Erasmus from its native soil to his own field " (p. 79); the ideas of Erasmus " were interpreted agreeably to Luther's own ways and logic " (cp. p. v.); it would not be right " simply to take for granted that Luther's supposed allies (such as Laurentius Valla, '*De libero arbitrio*'; cp. 'Werke,' Erl. ed., 58, p. 237 ff.) in the struggle with Erasmus, really were what he made them out to be " (p. 2).—H. Humbertclaude, " Erasme et Luther, leur polémique sur le libre arbitre," Paris, 1910, lays still greater stress on the injustice done to Erasmus by Luther.

[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 531; " Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 523. Cp. Enders, " Luthers Briefwechsel," 9, p. 253, n. 3, and our vol. ii., p. 398 f.

[4] " Opp. lat. exeg.," 7, p. 74. Cp. our vol. i., p. 400 f.

he taught from his professor's chair and what we find vouched for in the notes of a zealous pupil of whose fidelity there can be no question. And yet it has been proved, that, with the possible exception of Abelard, not one can be found who thus explained the passage of which Luther speaks ("*hunc locum*"), whilst Luther himself was acquainted with some at least of the more than sixty commentators who interpret it otherwise. Significant enough is the fact that he only reached this false interpretation gradually.

Luther also says that he and all the others had been told it was a mortal sin to leave their cell without their scapular, though he never attempts to prove that this was the general opinion, or was even held by anybody. The rule of his Order rejected such exaggeration. All theologians were agreed that such trifles did not constitute a grievous sin. Luther was perfectly aware that Gerson, who was much read in the monasteries, was one of these theologians; he praised him, because, though looked at askance at Rome, he set consciences free from over-great scrupulosity and refused to brand the non-wearing of the scapular as a crime.[1] Gerson was indeed not favourably regarded in Rome, but this was for other reasons, not, as Luther makes out, on account of such common-sense teaching as the above.

Then again we have the untruth he is never tired of reiterating, viz. that in the older Church people thought they could be saved only by means of works, and that, through want of faith in Christ, the "Church had become a whore."[2] Yet ecclesiastical literature in Luther's day no less than in ours, and likewise an abundance of documents bearing on the point teach quite the contrary and make faith in Christ the basis of all the good works enjoined.[3] All were aware, as Luther himself once had been, that outward works taken by themselves were worthless. And yet Luther, in one of the charges which he repeated again and again, though at the outset he cannot have believed it, says: "The question is, how we are to become pious. The Grey Friar says: Wear a grey hood, a rope and the tonsure. The Black Friar says: Put on a black frock. The Papist: Do

[1] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 41.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 391 ("Tischreden").

[3] Cp. e.g. the summarised teaching of an eminent theologian, Denis the Carthusian, in Krogh-Tonning, "Der letzte Scholastiker," 1904.

this or that good work, hear Mass, pray, fast, give alms, etc., and each one whatever he fancies will help him to be saved. But the Christian says: Only by faith in Christ can you become pious, and righteous and secure salvation; only through Grace alone, without any work or merits of your own. Now look and see which is true righteousness."[1]

Let us listen for a moment to the indignant voice of a learned Catholic contemporary, viz. the Saxon Dominican, Bartholomew Kleindienst, himself for a while not unfavourable to the new errors, who, in 1560, replied to Luther's misrepresentations: "Some of the leaders of sects are such impudent liars as, contrary to their own conscience, to persuade the poor people to believe, that we Catholics of the present day, or as they term us Papists, do not believe what the old Papists believed; we no longer think anything of Christ, but worship the Saints, not merely as the friends of God but as gods themselves; nay, we look upon the Pope as our God; we wish to gain heaven by means of our works, without God's Grace; we do not believe in Holy Writ; have no proper Bible and should be unable to read it if we had; trust more in holy water than in the blood of Christ. . . . Numberless such-like horrible, blasphemous and hitherto unheard-of lies they invent and use against us. The initiate are well aware that this is the chief trick of the sects, whereby they render the Papacy an abomination to simple and otherwise well-disposed folk."[2]

But had not Luther, carried away by his zeal against the Papists, taken his stand on the assumption, that, against the deception and depravity of the Papal Antichrist, every weapon was good provided only that it helped to save souls? Such at any rate was his plea in justification of his work "An den christlichen Adel."[3] Again, during the menacing

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 391.

[2] From Kleindienst, "Ein recht catholisch Ermanung an seine lieben Teutschen," Dillingen, 1560, Paulus, "Die deutschen Dominikaner," etc., 1903, p. 276.

[3] To Johann Lang, Aug. 18, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 461: "*Nos hic persuasi sumus, papatum esse veri et germani illius Antichristi sedem, in cuius deceptionem et nequitiam ob salutem animarum nobis omnia licere arbitramur.*" This must not be translated "to their deceiving and destruction," but, "against their trickery and malice." The passage strictly refers to his passionate work "An den christlichen Adel," but seems also to be intended generally.

Diet of Augsburg, when recommending the use of the questionable "Gospel-proviso," he let fall the following in a letter: Even "tricks and failings" ("*doli et lapsus*"), should they occur amongst his followers in their resistance to the Papists, "can easily be atoned for once we have escaped the danger."[1] He even adds: "For God's Mercy watches over us."

In the midst of the double-dealing then in progress Luther again appealed to Christ in his letter to Wenceslaus Link on Sep. 20, 1530, where he says: Christ "would be well pleased with such deceit and would scornfully cheat the [Papist] deceivers, as he hoped," i.e. raise false hopes that the Lutherans would yield; later they would find out their mistake, and that they had been fooled. Here is my view of the matter, he continues, "I am secure, that without my consent, their consent [the concessions of Melanchthon and his friends at the Diet] is invalid. Even were I too to agree with these blasphemers, murderers and faithless monsters, yet the Church and [above all] the teaching of the Gospel would not consent." This was his "Gospel-proviso," thanks to which all the concessions, doctrinal or moral, however solemnly granted by him or by his followers, might be declared invalid—"once we have escaped the danger." (See vol. iii., p. 337 ff.)

The underhandedness which he advocated in order that the people might not be made aware of the abrogation of the Mass, has been considered above (vol. ii., p. 321). Another strange trick on his part—likewise for the better furtherance of his cause—was his attempt to persuade the Bishop of Samland, George von Polenz, who had fallen away from the Church and joined him, "to proceed with caution";

[1] To Melanchthon, Aug. 28, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 235. Cp. vol. ii., p. 386. Luther says: "*dolos et lapsus nostros facile emendabimus*"; thus assuming his part of the responsibility. The explanation that he is speaking merely of the mistakes which Melanchthon might make, and simply wished "to console and sympathise with him," is too far-fetched to be true. In his edition of the "Briefwechsel" Enders has struck out the word "*mendacia*" after "*dolos*," though wrongly, as we shall see in vol. vi., xxxvi., 4. According to Enders the handwriting is too faint for it to be accepted as genuine. As there is no original of the letter the question remains how it came into the old copies which were in Lutheran hands. In any case, such an interpollation would be more difficult to understand than its removal. Cp. also Luther's own justification of such *mendacia* in 1524 and 1528, given below on p. 109 ff.

" therefore that it would be useful for him [the Bishop] to appear to suspend his judgment (" *ut velut suspendens sententiam appareret* ") ; to wait until the people had consented, and then throw in his weight as though he had been conquered by their arguments."[1] Couched in Luther's ordinary language this would mean that the Bishop was to pretend to be wavering between Christ and Antichrist, between hell and the Evangel, though any such wavering, to say nothing of any actual yielding, would have been a capital crime against religion. At the best the Bishop could only hypocritically feign to be wavering in spite of the other public steps he had taken in Luther's favour and of which the latter was well aware.

Later, in 1545, considering the " deception and depravity " of the Papacy Luther thought himself justified in insinuating in a writing against the Catholic Duke Henry of Brunswick,[2] then a prisoner, that the Pope had furnished him supplies for his unfortunate warlike enterprise against the allies of the evangelical confession.

Of this there was not the shadow of a proof. The contrary is clear from Protestant documents and protocols.[3] The Court of the Saxon Electorate, where an insult to the Emperor was apprehended, was aghast at Luther's resolve to publish the charge concerning the " equipment from Italy," and Chancellor Brück hastened to request him to alter the proofs for fear of evil consequences.[4] Luther, however, was in no mood to yield ; the writing comprising this malicious insinuation and other falsehoods was even addressed in the form of a letter to the Saxon Elector and the allied Princes. At the same time the author, both in the text and in his correspondence, gave the impression that the writing had been composed without the Elector's knowledge and only at the request of " many others, some of them great men," though in reality, as Protestants admit, the " work had been written to order," viz. at the instigation of the Electoral Court.[5]

" We all know," Luther says, seemingly with the utmost gravity, in this work against the Duke, " that Pope and Papists desire our death, body and soul. We, on the other hand, desire

[1] To the apostate Franciscan Johann Briesmann, July 4, 1524, " Briefwechsel," 4, p. 360. These instructions to the preacher who was to work for the apostasy of the Teutonic Order in Prussia are characteristic of Luther's diplomacy. Cp. the directions to Martin Weier (above, vol. ii., p. 323).

[2] " Briefe," 6, p. 386 ff.

[3] Cp. v. Druffel in the " SB. der bayer. Akad., phil.-hist. Kl.," 2, 1888, and " Forschungen zur deutschen Gesch.," 25, p. 71.

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 693, p. 612, n. 1.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 612.

to save them with us, soul and body."[1] There is no need to waste words on the intentions here ascribed to the Papists. As to Luther's own good intentions so far as the material welfare of the Papists goes, what he says does not tally with the wish he so loudly expressed at that very time for the bloody destruction of the Pope. Further, as regards the Papists' souls, what he said of his great opponent, Archbishop Albert of Mayence, deserves to be mentioned: "He died impenitent in his sins and must be damned eternally, else the Christian faith is all wrong."[2] Did Luther perhaps write this with a heavy heart? Yet he also condemns in advance the soul of the unhappy Duke of Brunswick, "seeing there is no hope of his amendment," and "even though he should feign to repent and become more pious," yet he would not be trusted since "he might pretend to repent and amend merely in order to climb back to honour, lands and people, which assuredly would be nothing but a false and foxy repentance."[3] Hence he insists upon the Princes refusing to release the Duke. But even his own friends will not consider his religious motives for this very profound or genuine, for instance, when he says: Were he to be released, "many pious hearts would be saddened and their prayers for your Serene Highnesses become tepid and cold."[4] His political reasons were no less founded on untruth. The only object of the League of the Catholic Princes was to seize upon the property of the evangelical Princes; "they were thinking, not of the Christian faith, but of the lands of the Elector and the Landgrave"; they have made "one league after the other" and now "call it a defensive one, as though forsooth they were in danger," whereas "we for our part have without intermission prayed, implored, called and cried for peace."[5]

While Luther was himself playing fast and loose with truth, he was not slow to accuse his opponents of lying even when they presented matters as they really were. When Eck published the Bull of Excommunication, which Luther himself knew to be authentic, he was roundly rated for saying that his "tissue of lies" was "the Pope's work."[6] In fact, in all and everything that Catholics undertake against his cause, they are seeking "to deceive us and the common people, though well aware of the contrary. . . . You see how they seek the truth. . . . They are rascals incarnate."[7] In fighting against the lies of his opponents Luther, once,—curiously enough—in his writing "Widder die hymelischen Propheten" actually takes the Pope under

[1] "Briefe," 6, p. 401. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 386.
[3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, p. 387. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 391.
[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 592; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 29.
[7] *Ibid.*, 26, p. 532 f.=63, p. 276.

his protection against the calumnies of his Wittenberg opponent Carlstadt; seeking to brand him as a liar, he declares that he "was notoriously telling lies of the Pope."

We already know how much Carlstadt had to complain of Luther's lying and fickleness.

This leads to a short review of the remarks made by Luther's then opponents and friends concerning his want of truthfulness.

2. Opinions of Contemporaries in either Camp

Luther's work against Duke Henry of Brunswick entitled "Wider Hans Worst" was so crammed with malice and falsehoods that even some of Luther's followers were disposed to complain of its unseemliness. Simon Wilde, who was then studying medicine at Wittenberg, wrote on April 8, 1541, when forwarding to his uncle the Town Clerk, Stephen Roth of Zwickau, a copy of the booklet which had just appeared: "I am sending you a little work of Dr. Martin against the Duke of Brunswick which bristles with calumnies, but which also [so he says] contains much that is good, and may be productive of something amongst the virtuous."[1]

Statements adverse to Luther's truthfulness emanating from the Protestant side are not rare; particularly are they met with in the case of theologians who had had to suffer from his violence; nor can their complaints be entirely disallowed simply because they came from men who were in conflict with him, though the circumstance would call for caution in making use of them were the complaints not otherwise corroborated.

Œcolampadius in his letter to Zwingli of April 20, 1525, calls Luther a "master in calumny, and prince of sophists."[2]

The Strasburg preachers Bucer and Capito, though reputed for their comparative moderation, wrote of one of Luther's works on the Sacrament, that "never had anything more sophistical and calumnious seen the light."[3]

[1] G. Buchwald, "Simon Wilde" ("Mitt. der deutschen Gesellschaft zur Erforschung vaterländ. Sprache und Altertums in Leipzig," 9, 1894, p. 61 ff.), p. 95: "*libellum calumniis refertissimum.*"

[2] "Zwinglii Opp.," 8, p. 165: "*calumniandi magister et sophistarum princeps.*"

[3] Letter to J. Vadian, April 14, 1528, "Die Vadianische Briefsammlung," 4, p. 101. "Mitt. zur vaterl. Gesch. von St. Gallen," 28, 1902.

Thomas Münzer repeatedly calls his enemy Luther "Dr. Liar" and "Dr. Lyinglips,"[1] on account of the unkindness of his polemics; more picturesquely he has it on one occasion, that "he lied from the bottom of his gullet."[2]

Bucer complains in terms of strong disapprobation, that, when engaged with his foes, Luther was wont to misrepresent and distort their doctrines in order the more readily to gain the upper hand, at least in the estimation of the multitude. He finds that "in many places" he has "rendered the doctrines and arguments of the opposite side with manifest untruth," for which the critic is sorry, since this "gave rise to grave doubts and temptations" amongst those who detected this practice, and diminished their respect for the Evangelical teaching.[3]

The Lutheran, Hieronymus Pappus, sending Luther's work "Wider Hans Worst" to Joachim Vadian, declared: "In calumny he does not seem to me to have his equal."[4]

Johann Agricola, once Luther's friend, and then, on account of his Antinomianism, his adversary, brings against Luther various charges in his Notes (see above, vol. iii., p. 278); the worst refer to his "lying." God will punish Luther, he writes, referring to his work "Against the Antinomians"; "he has heaped too many lies on me before all the world." Luther had said that Agricola denied the necessity of prayer or good works; this the latter, appealing to his witnesses, brands as an "abominable lie." He characterises the whole tract as "full of lies,"[5] and, in point of fact, there is no doubt it did contain the worst exaggerations.

Among the writers of the opposite camp the first place is due to Erasmus. Of one of the many distortions of his meaning committed by Luther he says: "It is true I never look for moderation in Luther, but for so malicious a calumny I was certainly not prepared."[6] Elsewhere he flings in his face the threat: "I shall show everybody what a master you are in the art of misrepresentation, defamation, calumny and exaggeration. But the world knows this already. . . . In your sly way you contrive to twist even what is absolutely true, whenever it is to your

[1] "Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke," Hft. 118, 1893, pp. 19, 29, etc.

[2] Cp. Münzer in Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 4, p. 374, n. 6. *Ibid.*, p. 373, n. 1, "the mendacious Luther."

[3] "Vergleichung D. Luthers und seines Gegenteiles vom Abendmahl Christi," 1528, p. 23.

[4] "Vadianische Briefsammlung," 6, p. 16 ("Mitt. z. v. G. v. S.G."), 30, 1, 1906): Pappus calls the book: "*librum famosissimum, plaustra et carros convitiorum. Misereor huius tam felicissimi ingenii, quod tantis se immiscet sordibus; et profecto, ut est Lutherus vertendo et docendo inimitabilis, ita mihi iam quoque videtur calumniando non parem habere.*" Letter of April 13, 1541. Pappus was Burgomaster of Lindau.

[5] E. Thiele, "Theol. Stud. und Krit.," 1907, p. 265 f.

[6] "Ep.," 1, 18; "Opp.," 3, col. 1056.

interest to do so. You know how to turn black into white and to make light out of darkness."[1] Disgusted with Luther's methods, he finally became quite resigned even to worse things. He writes: "I have received Luther's letter; it is simply the work of a madman. He is not in the least ashamed of his infamous lies and promises to do even worse. What can those people be thinking of who confide their souls and their earthly destiny to a man who allows himself to be thus carried away by passion?"[2]

The polemic, Franz Arnoldi, tells Luther, that one of his works contains "as many lies as words."[3]

Johann Dietenberger likewise says, referring to a newly published book of Luther's which he had been studying: "He is the most mendacious man under the sky."[4]

Paul Bachmann, shortly after the appearance of Luther's booklet "Von der Winckelmesse," in his comments on it emits the indignant remark: "Luther's lies are taller even than Mount Olympus."[5]

"This is no mere erring man," Bachmann also writes of Luther, "but the wicked devil himself to whom no lie, deception or falsehood is too much."[6]

Johann Eck sums up his opinion of Luther's truthfulness in these words: "He is a man who simply bristles with lies ('*homo totus mendaciis scatens*')".[7] The Ingolstadt theologian, like Bartholomew Kleindienst (above, p. 95), was particularly struck by Luther's parody of Catholic doctrine.—Willibald Pirkheimer's words in 1528 we already know.[8]

We pass over similar unkindly epithets hurled at him by indignant Catholic clerics, secular, or regular. The latter, particularly, speaking with full knowledge and therefore all the more indignantly, describe as it deserves what he says of vows, as a glaring lie, of the falsehood of which Luther, the quondam monk, must have been fully aware.

Of the Catholic Princes who were capable of forming an opinion, Duke George of Saxony with his downright language must be mentioned first. In connection with the Pack negotiations he says that Luther is the "most cold-blooded liar he had ever come across." "We must say and write of him, that the apostate monk lies like a desperate, dishonourable and forsworn miscreant." "We have yet to learn from Holy Scripture that Christ ever bestowed the mission of an Apostle on such an

[1] "*Hyperaspistes*," 1, 9, col. 1043.

[2] Letter to George Agricola, in Buchwald, "Zeitschr. für kirchl. Wissenschaft und kirchl. Leben," 5, Leipzig, 1884, p. 56.

[3] "Antwort auf das Büchlein," 1531. "Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 89.

[4] "*De votis monasticis*," 1, 2, Colon., 1524, Bl. S 5′: "*Omnium mendacissimus, qui sub cœlo vivunt, hominum.*"

[5] "Lobgesang auff des Luthers Winckelmesse," Leipzig, 1534, Bl. E 2′. The author was Abbot of Altzelle.

[6] "Ein Maulstreich dem lutherischen lügenhaften, weit aufgesperrten Rachen," Dresden, 1534.

[7] See above, vol. ii., p. 147.

[8] See vol. ii., p. 40: "*Quum ita frontem perfricuerit, ut a nullo abstineat mendacio,*" etc.

open and deliberate liar or sent him to proclaim the Gospel."[1] Elsewhere he reminds Luther of our Lord's words: "By their fruits you shall know them": To judge of the spirit from the fruits, Luther's spirit must be a "spirit of lying"; indeed, Luther proved himself "possessed of the spirit of lies."[2]

3. The Psychological Problem

Self-suggestion and Scriptural Grounds of Excuse

Not merely isolated statements, but whole series of regularly recurring assertions in Luther's works, constitute a real problem, and, instead of challenging refutation make one ask how their author could possibly have come to utter and make such things his own.

A Curious Mania.

He never tires of telling the public, or friends and supporters within his own circle, that "not one Bishop amongst the Papists reads or studies Holy Scripture"; "never had he [Luther] whilst a Catholic heard anything of the Ten Commandments"; in Rome they say: "Let us be cheerful, the Judgment Day will never come"; they also call anyone who believes in revelation a "poor simpleton"; from the highest to the lowest they believe that "there is no God, no hell and no life after this life"; when taking the religious vows the Papists also vowed they "had no need of the Blood and Passion of Christ"; I, too, "was compelled to vow this"; all religious took their vows "with a blasphemous conscience."

He says: In the Papacy "they did not preach Christ," but only the Mass and good works; and further: "No Father [of the Church] ever preached Christ"; and again: "They knew nothing of the belief that Christ died for us"; or: "No one [in Popery] ever prayed"; and: Christ was looked upon only as a "Judge" and we "merely fled from the wrath of God," knowing nothing of His mercy. "The Papists," he declares, "condemned marriage as forbidden by God," and "I myself, while still a monk, was of the same opinion, viz. that the married state was a reprobate state."

In the Papacy, so Luther says in so many words, "people sought to be saved through Aristotle."[3] "In the Papacy the parents did not provide for their children. They believed that only monks and priests could be saved."[4] "In the Papacy you will hardly meet with an honest man who lives up to his calling" (i.e. who performs his duties as a married man).[5]

[1] Letter of George, in Hortleder, "Von den Ursachen des deutschen Krieges Karls V," pp. 604, 606. Denifle, 1^2, p. 126, n. 3.

[2] Vol. ii., p. 395 f.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 286.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 210. The last three passages are from sermons preached by Luther at Wittenberg in 1528 when doing duty for Bugenhagen.

But enough of such extravagant assertions, which to Catholics stand self-condemned, but were intended by their author to be taken literally. He flung such wild sayings broadcast among the masses, until it became a second nature with him. For we must bear in mind that grotesque and virulent misstatements such as the above occur not merely now and again, but simply teem in his books, sermons and conversations. It would be an endless task to enumerate his deliberate falsehoods. He declares, for instance, that the Papists, in all their collects and prayers, extolled merely the merits of the Saints; yet this aspersion which he saw fit to cast upon the Church in the interests of his polemics, he well knew to be false, having been familiar from his monastic days with another and better aspect of the prayers he here reviles. He knew that the merits of the Saints were referred to only in some of the collects; he knew, moreover, why they were mentioned there, and that they were never alleged alone but always in subordination to the merits and the mediation of our Saviour ("*Per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum*," etc.).

A favourite allegation of Luther's, viz. that the Church of the past had regarded Christ exclusively as a stern Judge, was crushingly confuted in Denifle's work. The importance of this brilliant and scholarly refutation lies in the fact, that it is principally founded on texts and usages of the older Church with which Luther was perfectly familiar, which, for instance, he himself had recited in the liturgy and more especially in the Office of his Order year after year, and which thus bear striking testimony against his good faith in the matter of his monstrous charge.[1]

It is a matter of common knowledge that, also in other branches of the history of theology and ecclesiastical life, Denifle has refuted with rare learning, though with too sharp a pen, Luther's paradoxical "lies" concerning mediæval Catholicism. It is to be hoped that this may be followed by other well-grounded and impartial comments from the pen of other writers, for, in spite of their monstrous

[1] "Luther," 1^2, p. 400 ff. We may discount the objection of Protestant controversialists who plead that Luther at least described correctly the popular notions of Catholics. The popular works then in use, handbooks and sermons for the instruction of the people, prayer-books, booklets for use in trials and at the hour of death, etc., give a picture of the then popular piety, and the best refutation of Luther's statements.

character, some of Luther's accusations still live, partly no doubt owing to the respect in which he is held. Some of them will be examined more closely below. The principal aim of these pages is, however, to seek the psychological explanation of the strange peculiarity which manifests itself in Luther's intellectual life, viz. the abnormal tendency to level far-fetched charges, sometimes bordering on the insane.

An Attempt at a Psychological Explanation.

A key to some of these dishonest exaggerations is to be found in the need which Luther experienced of arming himself against the Papacy and the older Church by ever more extravagant assertions. Realising how unjust and untenable much of his position was, and oppressed by those doubts to which he often confessed, a man of his temper was sorely tempted to have recourse to the expedient of insisting yet more obstinately on his pet ideas. The defiance which was characteristic of him led him to pile up one assertion on the other which his rhetorical talent enabled him to clothe in his wonted language. Throughout he was acting on impulse rather than from reflection.

To this must be added—incredible as it may appear in connection with the gravest questions of life—his tendency to make fun. Jest, irony, sarcasm were so natural to him as to obtrude themselves almost unconsciously whenever he had to do with opponents whom he wished to crush and on whom he wished to impose by a show of merriment which should display the strength of his position and his comfortable sense of security, and at the same time duly impress his own followers. Those who looked beneath the surface, however, must often have rejoiced to see Luther so often blunting the point of his hyperboles by the drolleries by which he accompanies them, which made it evident that he was not speaking seriously. To-day, too, it would be wrong to take all he says as spoken in dead earnest; at the same time it is often impossible to determine where exactly the serious ends and the trivial, vulgar jest begins; probably even Luther himself did not always know. A few further examples may be given.

"In Popery we were compelled to listen to the devil and to worship things that some monk had spewed or excreted, until at last we lost the Gospel, Baptism, the Sacrament and everything

else. After that we made tracks for Rome or for St. James of Compostella and did everything the Popish vermin told us to do, until we came to adore even their lice and fleas, nay, their very breeches. But now God has returned to us."[1]

"Everywhere there prevailed the horrid, pestilential teaching of the Pope and the sophists, viz. that a man must be uncertain of God's grace towards himself ('*incertum debere esse de gratia Dei erga se*')."[2] By this doctrine and by their holiness-by-works Pope and monks "had driven all the world headlong into hell" for "well-nigh four hundred years."[3] Of course, "for a man to be pious, or to become so by God's Grace, was heresy" to them; "their works were of greater value, did and wrought more than God's Grace,"[4] and with all this "they do no single work which might profit their neighbour in body, goods, honour or soul."[5]

A. Kalthoff[6] remarks of similar distortions of which Luther

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 5^2, p. 378.

[2] Cp. "Comment. in Gal.," 2, p. 175. "Opp. lat, exeg.," 16, p. 197 *seq.* Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 2^2, p. 218.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 7^2, p. 255. [4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 256. "The Pope's teaching and all the books and writings of his theologians and decretalists did nothing but revile Christ and His Baptism, so that no one was able to rejoice or comfort himself therewith"; this he knew, having been himself fifteen years a monk. *Ibid.*, 19^2, p. 151, in a sermon of 1535, "On Holy Baptism."

Even in the learned disputations of his Wittenberg pupils similar assertions are found: The Papists have ever taught that the powers of man after the Fall still remained unimpaired ("*adhuc integras*"), and that therefore he could fulfil the whole law; doctrines no better than those of the Turks and Jews had been set up ("*non secus apud Turcas et Iudæos*," etc.). "Disputationes," ed. Drews, p. 340.

And so Luther goes on down to the last sermon he preached at Eisleben just before his death: The Pope destroyed Baptism and only left works, tonsures, etc., in the Church (*ibid.*, 20^2, 2, p. 534); the "purest monks" had usually been the "worst lewdsters" (p. 542); the monks had done nothing for souls, but "merely hidden themselves in their cells" (p. 543); "the monks think if they keep their Rule they are veritable saints" (p. 532).

In his accusations against the religious life we find him making statements which, from his own former experience, he must have known to be false. For instance, when he says, that, in their hypocritical holiness, they had regarded it as a mortal sin to leave their cell without the scapular ("Werke," Erl. ed., 44, p. 347; 38, p. 203; 60, p. 270). Denifle proves convincingly (1^2, p. 54), that all monks were well aware that such customs, prescribed by the Constitutions, were not binding under sin, but merely exposed transgressors to punishment by their superiors.—Luther also frequently declared, that in the Mass every mistake in the ceremonies was looked upon as a mortal sin, even the omission of an "*enim*" or an "*æterni*" in the Canon (*ibid.*, 28, p. 65), and that the incorrect use of the frequently repeated sign of the cross had caused such apprehension, that they were "plagued beyond measure with the Mass" (*ibid.*, 59, p. 98). And yet his own words ("Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 164) show he was aware that such involuntary mistakes were no sin: "*cum casus quispiam nullum peccatum fuerit.*"

[6] "Das Zeitalter der Reformation," Jena, 1907, p. 221.

was guilty: "Hardly anyone in the whole of history was so little able to bear contradiction as Luther; it was out of the question to discuss with him any opinion from another point of view; he preferred to contradict himself or to assert what was absolutely monstrous, rather than allow his opponent even a semblance of being in the right."—The misrepresentation of Catholic doctrine which became a tradition among Lutheran polemics was in great part due to Luther.—With equal skill and moderation Duke Anton Ulrich of Brunswick, in his "Fifty Reasons" for returning to the Catholic Church,[1] protests against this perversion of Catholic doctrine by Lutheran writers. He had observed that arguments were adduced by the Lutherans to prove truths which the Church does not deny at all, whilst the real points at issue were barely touched upon. "For instance, they bring forward a heap of texts to prove that God alone is to be adored, though Catholics never question it, and they teach that it is a sin of idolatry to pay divine worship to any creature." "They extol the merits of Christ and the greatness of His satisfaction for our sins. But what for? Catholics teach the same, viz. that the merits of Christ are infinite and that His satisfaction suffices to blot out all the sins of the world, and thus they, too, hold the Bible doctrine of the appropriation of Christ's merits by means of their own good works (1 Peter i. 10)."

Two things especially were made the butt of Luther's extravagant and untrue charges and insinuations, viz. the Mass and the religious life. In his much read Table-Talk the chapter on the Mass is full of misrepresentations such as can be explained only by the animus of the speaker.[2] Of religious he can relate the most incredible tales. Thus: "On the approach of death most of them cried in utter despair: Wretched man that I am; I have not kept my Rule and whither shall I flee from the anger of the Judge? Alas, that I was not a sow-herd, or the meanest creature on earth!"[3] On account of the moral corruption of the Religious Orders, he declares it would be right, "were it only feasible, to destroy both Papacy and monasteries at one blow!"[4] He is fond of jesting at the expense of the nuns; thus he makes a vulgar allusion to their supposed practice of taking an image of the Crucified to bed with them, as though it were their bridegroom. He roundly charges them all with arrogance: "The nuns are particularly reprehensible on account of their pride; for they boast: Christ is our bridegroom and we are His brides and other women are nothing."[5]

[1] "Cinquante raisons," Munich, 1736, 29, p. 37. Above, vol, iii., p. 273, n. 2.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 395 ff.

[3] Cp. *ibid.*, 31, p. 279.

[4] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 1, p. 227.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 5^2, p. 430 f.: "Yet how few can ever have had such a thought, much less expressed it?" Denifle-Weiss, 17^2, p. 774. Speaking of this passage, Denifle rightly remarks: "I have frequently pointed out that it was Luther's tactics to represent wicked Catholics as typical of all the rest." Here again Denifle might have quoted Luther against Luther, as indeed he often does. In one passage

It is putting the matter rather too mildly when a Protestant historian, referring to the countless assertions of this nature, remarks, "that, in view of his habits and temper, some of Luther's highly flavoured statements call for the use of the blue pencil if they are to be accorded historical value."[1]

Lastly, we must point to another psychological, or, more accurately, pathological, element which may avail to explain falsehoods so glaring concerning the Church of former times. Experience teaches, that sometimes a man soaked in prejudice will calumniate or otherwise assail a foe, at first from an evil motive and with deliberate injustice, and then, become gradually persuaded, thanks to the habit thus formed, of the truth of his calumnies and of the justice of his proceedings. Instances of such a thing are not seldom met with in history, especially among those engaged in mighty conflicts in the arena of the world. Injustice and falsehood, not indeed entirely, but with regard to the matter in hand, are travestied, become matters of indifference, or are even transformed in their eyes into justice and truth.

In Luther's case the phenomenon in question assumes a pathological guise. We cannot but perceive in him a kind of self-suggestion by which he imposed upon himself. Constituted as he was, such suggestion was possible, nay probable, and was furthermore abetted by his nervous excitement, the result of his never-ceasing struggle.[2]

It is in part to his power of suggestion that must also be attributed his success in making his disciples and followers accept even his most extravagant views and become in their turn missioners of the same.

("Werke," Erl. ed., 17^2, p. 412) Luther points out quite correctly, that to make all or even a class responsible for the faults of a few is to be guilty of injustice.

[1] "Theol. Stud. und Krit.," 1908, p. 580.

[2] "There are passionate natures gifted with a strong imagination, who gradually, and sometimes even rapidly, come to take in good faith that for true, which their own spirit of contradiction, or the desire to vindicate themselves and to gain the day, suggests. Such a one was Luther. . . . It was possible for him to persuade himself of things which he had once regarded in quite a different light." Thus Alb. M. Weiss, "Luther," 1^2, p. 424. Ad. Hausrath rightly characterises much of what Luther says that he had learnt of Rome on his trip thither, as the "product of a self-deception which is readily understood" ("Luthers Leben," 1, p. 79). "During a quarrel," aptly remarks Fénelon, "the imagination becomes heated and a man deceives himself."

The New Theology of Lying.

Another explanation, this time a theological one, of Luther's disregard for the laws of truth is to be found in the theory he set up of the permissibility of lies.

Previously, even in 1517, he, like all theologians, had regarded every kind of lie as forbidden. Theologians of earlier times, when dealing with this subject, usually agreed with Augustine and Peter Lombard, the "*Magister Sententiarum*," and likewise with Gratian, that all lies, even lies of excuse, are forbidden. After the commencement of his public controversy, however, strange as it may appear, Luther gradually came to assert in so many words that lies of excuse, of convenience, or of necessity were not reprehensible, but often good and to be counselled. How far this view concerning the lawfulness of lying might be carried, remained, however, a question to be decided by each one individually.

Formerly he had rightly declared: A lie is "contrary to man's nature and the greatest enemy of human society"; hence no greater insult could be offered than to call a man a liar. To this he always adhered. But besides, following St. Augustine, he had distinguished between lies of jest and of necessity and lies of detraction. Not merely the latter, so he declared, were unlawful, but, as Augustine taught, even lies of necessity or excuse—by which he understands lies told for our own or others' advantage, but without injury to anyone. "Yet a lie of necessity," he said at that time, "is not a mortal sin," especially when told in sudden excitement "and without actual deliberation." This is his language in January, 1517,[1] in his Sermons on the Ten Commandments, when explaining the eighth. Again, in his controversy with the Zwinglians on the Sacrament (1528), he incidentally shows his attitude by the remark, that, "when anyone has been publicly convicted of falsehood in one particular we are thereby sufficiently warned by God not to believe him at all."[2] In 1538, he says of the Pope and the Papists, that, on account of their lies the words of Chrysippus applied to them: "If you are a liar you lie even in speaking the truth."[3]

Meanwhile, however, his peculiar reading of the Old Testament, and possibly no less the urgent demands of his

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 510 f.; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, p. 200 *seq.*

[2] In his "Vom Abendmal Christi Bekentnis" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 241 ff.; Erl. ed., 30, p. 152 ff.), he frequently asserts this principle.

[3] "*Si mentiris, etiam quod verum dicis mentiris.*" "Werke," Erl. ed., 25[2], p. 214 in "Eines aus den hohen Artikeln des Bepstlichen Glaubens genant Donatio Constantini."

controversy, had exerted an unfortunate influence on his opinion concerning lies of convenience or necessity.

It seems to him that in certain Old-Testament instances of such lies those who employed them were not to blame. Abraham's lie in denying that Sarah was his wife, the lie of the Egyptian midwives about the Jewish children, Michol's lie told to save David, appear to Luther justifiable, useful and wholesome. On Oct. 2, 1524, in his Sermons on Exodus, as it would seem for the first time, he defended his new theory. Lies were only real lies "when told for the purpose of injuring our neighbour"; but, "if I tell a lie, not in order to injure anyone but for his profit and advantage and in order to promote his best interests, this is a lie of service"; such was the lie told by the Egyptian midwives and by Abraham; such lies fall "under the grace of Heaven, i.e. came under the forgiveness of sins"; such falsehoods "are not really lies."[1]

In his lectures on Genesis (1536–45) the same system has been further elaborated: "As a matter of fact there is only one kind of lie, that which injures our neighbour in his soul, goods or reputation." "The lie of service is wrongly termed a lie, for it rather denotes virtue, viz. prudence used for the purpose of defeating the devil's malice and in order to serve our neighbour's life and honour. Hence it may be called Christian and brotherly charity, or to use Paul's words: Zeal for godliness."[2] Thus Abraham "told no lie" in Egypt (Gen. xii. 11 ff.); what he told was "a lie of service, a praiseworthy act of prudence."[3]

According to his Latin Table-Talk not only Abraham's lie, but also Michol's was a "good, useful lie and a work of charity."[4] A lie for the advantage of another is, so he says, an act "by means of which we assist our neighbour."

"The monks," says Luther, "insist that the truth should be told under all circumstances."[5]—Such certainly was the teaching of St. Thomas of Aquin, whose opinion on the subject then held universal sway, and who rightly insists that a lie is never under any circumstances lawful.[6] St. Augustine likewise shared this monkish opinion, as Luther himself had formerly pointed out. Long before Aquinas's time this Doctor of the Church, whom Luther was later on deliberately to oppose,[7] had brought his view—the only reliable one, viz. that all untruth is wrong—into general recognition, thanks to his arguments and to the weight of his authority. Pope Alexander III, in a letter to the Arch-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 15; Erl. ed., 35, p. 18. The passage in vindication of the Egyptian midwives was not merely added later.

[2] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 5, p. 18. [3] *Ibid.*, 3, p. 139 *seq.*

[4] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 420. Cp. Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 85: "*Mentiri et fallere differunt, nam mendacium est falsitas cum studio nocendi, fallacia vero est simplex.*"

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 12, Sermon of Jan. 5, 1528.

[6] "Summa theol.," 2–2, Q. 111, a. 3.

[7] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 6, p. 288.

bishop of Palermo, declared that even a lie told to save another's life was unlawful ; this statement was incorporated in the official Decretals—a proof of the respect with which the mediæval Church clung to the truth.[1]

Some few writers of antiquity had, it is true, defended the lawfulness of lies of necessity or convenience. For instance, Origen, possibly under the influence of pagan philosophy, also Hilary and Cassian. Eventually their opinion disappeared almost completely.

It was reserved for Luther to revive the wrong view concerning the lawfulness of such lies, and to a certain extent to impose it on his followers. Theologically this spelt retrogression and a lowering of the standard of morality hitherto upheld. "Luther here forsook his beloved Augustine," says Stäudlin, a Protestant, "and declared certain lies to be right and allowable. This opinion, though not universally accepted in the Evangelical Church, became nevertheless a dominant one."[2]

[1] "Corp. iur. can.," ed. Friedberg, 2, p. 812. Yet a champion of Luther's "truthfulness" has attempted to prove of Alexander III, that "the objectivity of good was foreign to him," and that he taught that the end justifies the means. As K. Hampe has pointed out in the "Hist. Zeitschr.," 93, 1904, p. 415, the letter from the Pope to Thomas Becket ("P.L.," 200, col. 290), here referred to, has been "quite misunderstood." The same is the case with a letter of Gregory VII to Alphonsus of Castile, which has also been alleged to show that a Pope "had not unconditionally rejected lying, nay, had even made use of it." Gregory on the contrary declares that even "a lie told for a pious object and for the sake of peace" was a sin ("*illud peccatum esse non dubitaveris, in sacerdotibus quasi sacrilegium coniicias.*" "P.L.," 148, col. 604). Cp. Hampe, *ibid.*, p. 385 ff.; N. Paulus, "Lit. Beilage der Köln. Volksztng.," 1904, No. 51.

[2] "N. Lehrb. der Moral," Göttingen, 1825, p. 354. Sodeur ("Luther und die Lüge") says that in his teaching on lies Luther led the way to "a more profound understanding of the problem" (p. 2), he taught us "to act according to simple and fundamental principles" ; "under certain conditions" it became "a duty to tell untruths, not merely on casuistic grounds as formerly [!], but on principle ; Luther harked back to the all embracing duty of charity which constitutes the moral life of the Christian" (p. 30) ; he desired "falsehood to be used only to the advantage of our neighbour," "referring our conduct in every instance to the underlying principle of charity" (p. 32 f.). Chr. Rogge, another Protestant, says of all this ("Türmer," Jan., 1906, p. 491) : "I wish Sodeur had adopted a more decided and less apologetic attitude."

W. Walther, in the article quoted above (p. 81, n. 1), admits that Luther taught "in the clearest possible manner that cases might occur where a departure from truth became the Christian's duty. . . . It is probable that many Evangelicals will strongly repudiate this thesis, but, in our opinion, almost everybody follows it in practice" ; if charity led to untruth then the latter was no evil act, and it could

It must be specially noted that Luther does not justify lies of convenience, merely when told in the interests of our neighbour, but also when made use of for our own advantage when such is well pleasing in God's sight. This he states explicitly when speaking of Isaac, who denied his marriage with Rebecca so as to save his life: "This is no sin, but a serviceable lie by which he escaped being put to death by those with whom he was staying; for this would have happened had he said Rebecca was his wife."[1] And not only the lawful motive of personal advantage justifies, according to him, such untruths as do not injure others, but much more the love of God or of our neighbour, i.e. regard for God's honour; the latter motive it was, according to him, which influenced Abraham, when he gave out that Sarah was his sister. Abraham had to co-operate in accomplishing the great promise made by God to him and his progeny; hence he had to preserve his life, "in order that he might honour and glorify God thereby, and not give the lie to God's promises." Many Catholic interpreters of the Bible have sought to find expedients whereby, without justifying his lie, they might yet exonerate the great Patriarch of any fault. Luther, on the contrary, following

not be said that Luther accepted the principle that the end justifies the means. It was not necessary for Walther, having made Luther's views on lying his own, to assure us, "that they were not shared by every Christian, not even by every Evangelical." As regards the end justifying the means, Walther should prove that the principle does not really underlie much of what Luther says (cp. also above, p. 94 f.). Cp. what A. Baur says, with praiseworthy frankness, in a work entitled "Johann Calvin" ("Religionsgeschichtl. Volksb.," Reihe 4, Hft. 9), p. 29, concerning the reformer of Geneva whom he extols: "Consciously, or unconsciously, the principle that the end justifies the means became necessarily more and more deeply rooted in Calvin's mind, viz. the principle that the holy purpose willed by God justifies the use of means—the employment of which would otherwise appear altogether repugnant and reprehensible to a refined moral sense—at least when no other way presents itself for the attainment of the end. To renounce the end on account of the means appeared to Calvin a betrayal of God's honour and cause." And yet it is clear that only a theory which "transcends good and evil" can approve the principle that the end justifies the means.

We may add that, according to Walther ("Die Sittlichkeit nach Luther," 1909, p. 11 f.), Luther, in view of the exalted end towards which the means he used were directed, "gradually resolved" to set the law of charity above that of truth; he did not, however, do this in his practical writings, fearing its abuse; yet Luther still contends that Abraham was permitted to tell an untruth in order "to prevent the frustration of God's Will," i.e. from love of God (*ibid.*, p. 13).

[1] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 6, p. 289.

his own arbitrary interpretation of the Bible, approves, nay, even glories in the fault. "If," he says, "the text be taken thus [according to his interpretation] no one can be scandalised at it; for what is done for God's honour, for the glory and furtherance of His Word, that is right and well done and deserving of all praise."[1]

On such principles as these, what was there that Luther could not justify in his polemics with the older Church?

In his eyes everything he undertook was done for "God's glory." "For the sake of the Christian Church," he was ready, to tell "a downright lie" (above, p. 51) in the Hessian affair. "Against the deception and depravity of the Papal Antichrist," he regarded everything "as permissible" for the salvation of souls (above, p. 95); moreover, was not the war he was waging part of his divine mission? The public welfare and the exalted interests of his work might therefore at any time call for a violation of the truth. Was he to be deterred, perhaps, by the injury his opponents might thereby suffer? By no means. They suffered no real injury; on the contrary, it all redounded to their spiritual good, for by ending the reign of prejudice and error their souls would be saved from imminent peril and the way paved for the accomplishment of the ancient promises "to the glory and furtherance of the Word."

We do not mean to say that Luther actually formed his conscience thus in any particular instance. Of this we cannot judge and it would be too much to expect from him any statement on the subject. But the danger of his doing so was sufficiently proximate.

The above may possibly throw a new light on his famous words: "We consider everything allowable against the deception and depravity of the Papal Antichrist."[2]

Luther's Influence on His Circle.

Our remarks on Luther and lying would be incomplete were we not to refer to the influence his example and theory exercised on his surroundings and on those who assisted him in establishing the new Church system.

Melanchthon not only incurred, and justly too, the reproach of frequently playing the dishonest diplomatist, particularly

[1] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 3, pp. 139–144.
[2] To Johann Lang, Aug. 18, 1520, above, p. 95, n. 3.

at the Diet of Augsburg,[1] but even advocated in his doctrinal works the Lutheran view that lying is in many cases lawful.

"The lie of convenience," he says, "is praiseworthy, it is a good useful lie and proceeds from charity because one desires thereby to help one's neighbour." Hence, we may infer, where the object was to bring the Evangel home to a man, a lie was all the less reprehensible. Melanchthon appeals to Abraham's statement that Sarah was his sister (Gen. xii. and xx.), and to the artifice of Eliseus (4 Kings vi. 19), but overlooks the fact that these instances prove nothing in his favour since there no "neighbour was helped," but, on the contrary, untruth was dictated purely by self-love.[2]

During the negotiations carried on between England, Hesse and Saxony in view of an ecclesiastical understanding, Melanchthon, at the instance of the Elector of Saxony, drew up for him and the Landgrave, a document to be sent to Henry VIII of England, giving him information concerning the Anabaptist movement. His treatment of the matter has already been referred to (vol. iii., p. 374), but it now calls for more detailed consideration.

In this writing Melanchthon, to serve the interests of the new Evangel, had the courage to deny that the movement had made its appearance in those parts of Germany "where the pure Gospel is proclaimed," but was only to be met with "where the people are not preserved from such errors by sound doctrine," viz. "in Frisia and Westphalia."[3] The fact is that the Anabaptists were so numerous in the Saxon Electorate that we constantly hear of prosecutions being instituted against them. P. Wappler, for instance, quotes an official minute from the Weimar archives, actually dated in 1536, which states, that the Elector "caused many Anabaptists to be punished and put to death by drowning and the sword, and to suffer long terms of imprisonment."[4] Shortly before Melanchthon wrote the above, two Anabaptists had been executed in the Saxon Electorate. Beyond all doubt these facts were known to Melanchthon. The Landgrave of Hesse refused to allow the letter to be despatched. Feige, his Chancellor, pointed out the untruth of the statement, "that these errors only prevailed in places where the pure doctrine was lacking"; on the contrary, the Anabaptist error was unfortunately to be found throughout Germany, and even more under the Evangel than amongst the Papists.[5] An amended version of the letter, dated Sep. 23, 1536, was eventually sent to the King. Wappler, who relates all this fully, says: "Melanchthon was obviously influenced by his wish to warn the King of the 'plague' of the Anabaptist heresy and to predispose him

[1] See vol. ii., p. 384 ff. [2] "Corp. ref.," 20, p. 573.
[3] The document in "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 578.
[4] "Die Stellung Kursachsens und des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen zur Täuferbewegung," Münster, 1910, p. 75.
[5] Cp. Lenz, "Briefwechsel Philipps," 1, p. 320.

for the 'pure doctrine of the Evangel.'" "What he said was glaringly at variance with the actual facts."[1]

Like Luther, Martin Bucer, too, urged the Landgrave to tell a deliberate lie and openly deny his bigamy. Though at first unwilling, he had undertaken to advocate the Landgrave's bigamy with Luther and had defended it personally (above, p. 28). In spite of this, however, when complications arose on its becoming public, he declared in a letter of 1541 to the preachers of Memmingen, which so far has received little attention, that the Landgrave's wrong step, some rumours of which had reached his ears, should it prove to be true, could not be laid to his charge or to that of the Wittenbergers. "I declare before God ('*coram Deo affirmo*') that no one has given the Prince such advice, neither I, nor Luther, nor Philip, nor, so far as I know, any Hessian preacher, nor has anyone taught that Christians may keep concubines as well as their wives, or declared himself ready to defend such a step."[2] And, again calling God to witness ("*hæc ego ut coram Deo scripta*"), he declares that he had never written or signed anything in defence of the bigamy.[3] In the following year he appeared before the magistrates of Strasburg and, in the presence of two colleagues, "took God to witness concerning the suspicion of having advised the Landgrave the other marriage," "that the latter had consulted neither him nor any preacher concerning the matter"; he and Capito had "throughout been opposed to it" (the bigamy), "although his help had been sought for in such matters by honourable and highly placed persons."[4] The reference here is to Henry VIII of England, to whom, however, he had never expressed his disapproval of bigamy; in fact he, like Capito and the two Wittenbergers (above, p. 4), had declared his preference for Henry's taking an extra wife rather than divorcing his first.

Bucer (who had so strongly inveighed against Luther's lies, above, p. 99), where it was a question of a Catholic opponent like the Augustinian Johann Hoffmeister, had

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 74 f.

[2] "Corp. ref.," 10, p. 156 *seq.* N. Paulus in "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 147, 1911, p. 509.

[3] "*Quod defendam ipsum facinus, equidem nullum* [*scriptum*] *scripsi aut subscripsi.*" Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 511.

[4] F. W. Hassenkamp, "Hessische KG.," 1, p. 510. Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 512,

himself recourse to notorious calumnies concerning this man, whom even Protestant historians now allow to have been of blameless life and the "greatest enemy of immorality."[1] He accused him of "dancing with nuns," of "wallowing in vice," and of being "an utterly abandoned, infamous and dissolute knave," all of them groundless charges at very most based upon mere hearsay.[2]—This same Bucer, who accused the Catholic Princes of being double-tongued and pursuing dubious policies, was himself notorious amongst his own party for his wiliness, deceit and cunning.

Johann Bugenhagen, the Pastor of Wittenberg, when called upon to acknowledge his share in a certain questionable memorandum of a semi-political character also laid himself open to the charge of being wanting in truthfulness (vol. iii., p. 74 f.).

P. Kalkoff has recently made clear some of Wolfgang Capito's double-dealings and his dishonest behaviour, though he hesitates to condemn him for them. Capito had worked in Luther's interests at the Court of Archbishop Albert of Mayence, and there, with the Archbishop's help, "rendered incalculable services to the Evangelical cause." In extenuation of his behaviour Kalkoff says: "In no way was it more immoral than the intrigues" of the Elector Frederick. On the strength of the material he has collected J. Greving rightly describes Capito as a "thoroughbred hypocrite and schemer."[3] The dealings of this "eminent diplomatist," as Greving also terms him, remind us only too often of Luther's own dealings with highly placed ecclesiastics and seculars during the first period of his apostasy. If, in those early days, Luther's theory had already won many friends and imitators, in the thick of the fight it made even more converts amongst the new preachers, men ready to make full use of the alluring principle, that, against the depravity of the Papacy everything is licit.

From vituperation to the violation of truth there was but a step amidst the passion which prevailed. How Luther's abuse—ostensibly all for the love of his neighbour—infected his pupils is plain from a letter in the newly published

[1] H. Rocholl, in N. Paulus's art. on the Catholic lawyer and writer, Conrad Braun (†1563), in "Hist. Jahrb." (14, 1893, p. 517 ff.), p. 525.
[2] Paulus, "Johann Hoffmeister," 1891, p. 206, and in "Hist. Jahrb.," *loc. cit.*
[3] "Theol. Rev.," 1908, p. 215.

correspondence of the Brothers Blaurer. This letter, written from Wittenberg on Oct. 8, 1522, by Thomas Blaurer, to Ulrich Zasius, contains the following: "Not even from the most filthy and shameful vituperation [of the hateful Papacy] shall we shrink, until we see it everywhere despised and abhorred." What had to be done was to vindicate the doctrine that, "Christ is our merit and our satisfaction."[1] Luther, he says, poured forth abuse ("*convicia*"), but only to God's glory, and for the "salvation and encouragement of the little ones."[2]

4. Some Leading Slanders on the Mediæval Church Historically Considered

"In Luther's view the Middle Ages, whose history was fashioned by the Popes, was a period of darkest night. . . . This view of the Middle Ages, particularly of the chief factor in mediæval life, viz. the Church in which it found its highest expression, is one-sided and distorted." Such is the opinion of a modern Protestant historian. He is sorry that false ideas of the mediæval Church and theology "have been sheltered so long under the ægis of the reformer's name."[3] —"It will not do," a lay Protestant historian, as early as 1874, had told the theologians of his faith, speaking of Köstlin's work "Luthers Theologie," "to ignore the contemporary Catholic literature when considering Luther and the writings of the reformers. . . . It is indispensable that the condition of theology from about 1490 to 1510 should be carefully examined. We must at all costs rid ourselves of the caricatures we meet with in the writings of the reformers, and of the misunderstandings to which they gave rise, and learn from their own writings what the theologians of that time actually thought and taught." "Paradoxical as it may sound, it is just the theological side of the history of the Reformation which, at the present day, is least known."[4]

[1] Bd. 1, 1908, p. 66: "*Nullis conviciis parcemus quantumvis turpibus et ignominiosis,*" etc.

[2] Luther's friend Jonas also distinguished himself in controversy by the character of the charges he brings forward against his opponents as true "historia." (See above, vol. iii., p. 416, n. 3.)

[3] W. Köhler, "Luthers Werden" ("Prot. Monatshefte," 1907, Hft. 8–9, p. 292 ff., p. 345 ff., p. 294).

[4] W. Maurenbrecher, "Studien und Skizzen zur Gesch. der Reform.," pp. 221, 220.

During the last fifty years German scholars have devoted themselves with zeal and enthusiasm to the external and social aspect of the Middle Ages. That great undertaking, the "*Monumenta Germaniæ historica*," its periodical the "Archiv," and a number of others dealing largely with mediæval history brought Protestants to a juster and more objective appreciation of the past. Yet the theological, and even in some respects the ecclesiastical, side has been too much neglected, chiefly because so many Protestant theologians were scrupulous about submitting the subject to a new and unprejudiced study. Hence the astonishment of so many when Johannes Janssen, with his "History of the German People," and, to pass over others, Heinrich Denifle with his work on Luther entered the field and demonstrated how incorrect had been the views prevalent since Luther's time concerning the doctrine and the ecclesiastical life of his age. Astonishment in many soon made way for indignation; in Denifle's case, particularly, annoyance was caused by a certain attitude adopted by this author which led some to reject in their entirety the theologico-historical consequences at which he arrived, whilst even Janssen was charged with being biassed. Other Protestants, however, have learned something from the Catholic works which have since made their appearance in greater numbers, have acknowledged that the ideas hitherto in vogue were behind the times and have invited scholars to undertake a more exact study of the materials.

"The later Middle Ages," says W. Friedensburg, speaking of the prevailing Protestant view, "seemed only to serve as a foil for the history of the Reformation, of which the glowing colours stood out all the more clearly against the dark background." "As late as a few years ago the history of the close of the Middle Ages was almost a '*terra incognita*.'" Only through Janssen, Friedensburg continues, "were we led to study more carefully the later Middle Ages" and to discover, amongst other things, that the "majority of the people [*sic*] had not really been so ignorant of the truth of Christianity," that "the Church had not yet lost her power over people's minds," that "towards the end of the Middle Ages the people had already been growing familiar with the Bible," and that "sermons in the vulgar tongue had not been neglected to the extent that has been frequently assumed." This author, like H. Böhmer, characterises it as erroneous "to suppose that Luther was the first to revive regard for Paul and to restore Paulinism" or "to insist upon the reform of godliness on the model of the theology of Christ." Coming to Denifle, he says,

that the latter "on account of his learning was without a doubt qualified as scarcely any other scholar of our time for the task he undertook. When he published his 'Luther' he could look back on many years of solid and fruitful labour in the field of mediæval Scholasticism and Mysticism." From Denifle's work it is clear that Luther was "but little conversant with mediæval Scholasticism, particularly that of Thomas Aquinas,"[1]

"Denifle is right," wrote Gustav Kawerau in an important Protestant theological periodical, "and touches a weak spot in Luther research when he reproaches us with not being sufficiently acquainted with mediæval theology." An "examination of the Catholic surroundings in which Luther moved" is, so Kawerau insists, essential, and Protestants must therefore apply themselves to "the examination of that theology which influenced Luther."[2]

What is, however, imperative is that this theology be, if possible, examined without Luther's help, i.e. without, as usual, paying such exaggerated regard to his own statements as to what influenced him.

Luther, moreover, does not always speak *against* the Middle Ages; on occasion he can employ its language himself, particularly when he thinks he can quote, in his own interests, utterances from that time. What W. Köhler says of a number of such instances holds good here: "Luther fancied he recognised himself in the Middle Ages, that is why his historical judgment is so often false." In point of fact, as the same writer remarks, "Luther's idea of history came from his own interior experience; this occupies the first place throughout."[3] If for "interior experience" we substitute "subjective bias" the statement will be even more correct.

In returning here to some of Luther's legends mentioned above (p. 92 f.) concerning the Catholic past and the religious views then prevailing, our object is merely to show by a few striking examples how wrong Luther was in charging the Middle Ages with errors in theology and morals.

One of his most frequently repeated accusations was, that the Church before his day had merely taught a hollow "holiness by works"; all exhortations to piety uttered by

[1] "Fortschritte in Kenntnis und Verständnis der RG." ("Schriften des Vereins für RG.," No. 100, 1910, pp. 1–59, pp. 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 16 f.). The author's standpoint is expressed on p. 13: "It is self-evident that this does not in any way detract from Luther's importance. . . . Luther merely stands out all the more as the last link of the previous evolution," etc. On p. 17 he declares that the author of "Luther und Luthertum" lacked entirely the "sense of truth." See the passage from Böhmer in "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung," [2], 1901, p. 144.

[2] "Theol. Stud. und Krit.," 1908, p. 581.

[3] "Luther und die KG.," 1, 1900, p. 363.

preachers and writers insisted solely on outward good works; of the need of cultivating an inward religious spirit, interior virtues or true righteousness of heart no one had any conception.

Against this we may set a few Catholic statements made during the years shortly before Luther's appearance.

Gabriel Biel, the "standard theologian" of his time, whose works Luther himself had studied during his theological course, in one of his sermons distinctly advocates the Church's doctrine against any external holiness-by-works. Commenting on the Gospel account of the hypocrisy and externalism of the Pharisees and their semblance of holiness, he pauses at the passage: "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. v. 20). "Hence, if we desire to be saved," he says, "our righteousness must not merely be shown in outward works but must reside in the heart; for without the inward spirit, outward works are neither virtuous nor praiseworthy, though the spirit may be so without outward works." After proving this he again insists: "Thus true service of God does not consist in externals; on the contrary it is on the inward, pious acts of the will that everything depends, and this presupposes a right judgment and the recognition of the spirit. Hence in the practice of good works we must expend greater care on the interior direction of the will." The learned preacher goes on fervently to exhort his hearers to amend their lives, to be humble, to trust in Christ and to lead lives of real, inward piety.[1]

Another preacher and theologian with whom Luther was well acquainted was Andreas Proles († 1503), the founder of the German Augustinian Congregation to which Luther had once belonged. In the sermons published by Petrus Sylvius, Proles insists upon the good intention and interior disposition by which works are sanctified. They are "smothered," so he tells his hearers, "if done not out of love for God but with evil intent, for instance, for the sake of praise, or in order to deceive, or again, if done in sin or for any bad purpose." "Hence . . . in the practice of all his works a man must diligently strive after Divine justice, after a true faith with love of God and of his neighbour, after innocence and humility of heart, with a good purpose and intention, since every good work, however insignificant, even a drink of cold water given to the meanest creature for God's sake, is deserving of reward in eternity. . . . Without charity neither faith nor good works are profitable unto salvation."[2]

At about that same time the so-called "holiness-by-works"

[1] "Sermo 60 in Dom. 6 post. Trin." ("*Sermones de tempore*," Tubingæ, 1500).

[2] "Sibend und Acht ader letzte Sermon," Lipsie, 1533. On this work cp. Paulus, "Die deutschen Dominikaner," p. 66, n. 2.

was also condemned by the learned Franciscan theologian, Stephen Brulefer. "Merit," so he emphasises, "depends not on the number of external works but on the zeal and charity with which the work is done; everything depends on the interior act of the will." Amongst his authorities he quotes the far-famed theologian of his Order, Duns Scotus, who had enunciated the principle with the concision of the scholastic: "*Deus non pensat quantum sed ex quanto.*"[1]

"God wants, not your work, but your heart." So Marquard of Lindau writes in his "Buch der X Gepot," printed in 1483. Before this, under the heading: "That we must love God above all things," he declares, that, whoever does not turn to God with his whole heart cannot merely by his works gain Him, even though he should surrender "all his possessions to God and allow himself to be burnt."[2]

Thus we find in the writings of that period, language by no means wanting in vigour used in denunciation of the so-called "holiness-by-works"; hence Luther was certainly not first in the field to raise a protest.

From their preachers, too, the people frequently heard this same teaching.

Johann Herolt, a Dominican preacher, very celebrated at the commencement of the 15th century, points out clearly and definitely in his sermons on the Sunday Epistles, that every work must be inspired by and permeated with charity if man's actions are not to deteriorate into a mere "holiness-by-works"; a poor man who, with a pure conscience, performs the meanest good work, is, according to him, of "far greater worth in God's sight than the richest Prince who erects churches and monasteries while in a state of mortal sin"; the outward work was of small account.[3] Herolt thus becomes a spokesman of "inwardness" in the matter of the fulfilment of the duties of the Christian life;[4] many others spoke as he did.

Sound instruction concerning "holiness-by-works" and the necessary "inwardness" was to be found in the most popular works of devotion at the close of the Middle Ages.

[1] "*Reportata in quatuor S. Bonaventuræ sententiarum libros, Scoti subtilis secundi,*" Basileæ, 1501. L. 2 d. 5 q. 6.

[2] Bl. 2. On the work, see Hasak, "Der christl. Glaube des deutschen Volkes beim Schluss des MA.," 1868, p. 67 ff.

[3] "*Sermones super epistolas dominicales,*" s. l. e. a. Bl. 51. N. Paulus quotes more of Herolt's sayings in "Johann Herolt und seine Lehre, Beitrag zur Gesch. des religiösen Volksunterrichts am Ausgang des MA." ("Zeitschr. f. kath. Theol.," 26, 1902, p. 417 ff., particularly p. 429).

[4] Paulus, *ibid.*, pp. 429, 430.

The "Evangelibuch," for instance, a sermon-book with glosses on the Sunday Gospels, has the following for those who are too much devoted to outward works: "It matters not how good a man may be or how many good works he performs unless, at the same time, he loves God." The author even goes too far in his requirements concerning the interior disposition, and, agreeably with a view then held by many, will not admit as a motive for love a wholesome fear of the loss of God; he says a man must love God, simply because "he is the most excellent, highest and most worthy Good; . . . for a man filled with Divine love does not desire the good which God possesses, but merely God Himself"; thus, in his repudiation of all so-called "holiness-by-works," he actually goes to the opposite extreme.[1]

Man becomes pleasing to God not by reason of the number or greatness of his works, but through the interior justice wrought in him by grace; such is the opinion of the Dominican, Johann Mensing. He protests against being accused of disparaging God's grace because at the same time he emphasises the value of works; he declares that he exalts the importance of God's sanctifying Grace even more than his opponents (the Lutherans) did, because, so he says, "we admit (what they deny, thereby disparaging the grace of God), viz. that we are not simply saved by God, but that He so raises and glorifies our nature by the bestowal of grace, that we are able ourselves to merit our salvation and attain to it of our own free will, which, without His Grace, would be impossible. Hence our belief is not that we are led and driven like cattle who know not whither they go. We say: God gives us His grace, faith and charity, at first without any merit on our part; then follow good works and merits, all flowing from the same Grace, and finally eternal happiness for such works as bring down Grace."[2]

This was the usual language in use in olden time, particularly in the years just previous to Luther, and it was in accordance with this that most of the faithful obediently shaped their lives. If abuses occurred—and it is quite true that we often do meet with a certain degree of formalism in the customs of the people—they cannot be regarded as the

[1] "Evangelibuch," Augsburg, 1560, Bl. 15. Cp. the Basle "*Plenarium*," 1514, Bl. 25.

[2] "Errettunge des christl. Bescheydts," usw., 1528, 32, Bl. 4⁰, h. 2.

rule and were reproved by zealous and clear-sighted churchmen.

A favourite work at that time was the "Imitation of Christ" by Thomas à Kempis. Thousands, more particularly amongst the clergy and religious, were edified by the fervent and touching expositions of the author to permeate all works with the spirit of interior piety.[1] We know how strongly he condemns formalism as exemplified in frequent pilgrimages devoid of virtue and the spirit of penance, and how he does not spare even the religious; "the habit and the tonsure make but little alteration, but the moral change and the entire mortification of the passions make a true religious."[2]

The practice of works of charity, which at that time flourished exceedingly among both clergy and laity, offered a field for the realisation of these principles of the true spirit in which good works are to be performed. We have countless proofs of how the faithful in Germany despoiled themselves of their temporal goods from the most sincere religious motives—out of love for their neighbour, or to promote the public Divine worship—"for the love of God our Lord," as a common phrase, used in the case of numerous foundations, expresses it.

G. Uhlhorn, the Protestant author of the "Geschichte der christlichen Liebestätigkeit," also pays a tribute to the spirit which preserved charity from degenerating into mere "holiness-by-works." "We should be doing injustice to that period," he says of the Middle Ages generally, "were we to think that it considered as efficacious, i.e. as satisfactory, mere external works apart from the motive which inspired them, for instance, alms without love." In support he quotes Thomas of Aquin and Pope Innocent III, remarking, however, that even such alms as were bestowed without this spirit of love were regarded, by the standard authorities, as predisposing a man for the reception of Grace, and as deserving of temporal reward from God, hence not as altogether "worthless and unproductive."[3]

Another fable concerning the Middle Ages, sedulously fostered by Luther in his writings, was, that, in those days

[1] "*De imitatione Christi*," 1, 15; and 3, 4. [2] *Ibid.*, 1, 17, 19.
[3] Bd. 2, Stuttgart, 1884, p. 143.

man had never come into direct relations with God, that the hierarchy had constituted a partition between him and Christ, and that, thanks only to the new Evangel, had the Lord been restored to each man, as his personal Saviour and the object of all his hopes ; Luther was wont to say that the new preaching had at length brought each one into touch with Christ the Lamb, Who taketh away our sin ; Melanchthon, in his funeral oration on Luther, also said of him, that he had pointed out to every sinner the Lamb in Whom he would find salvation.

To keep to the symbol of the Lamb : The whole Church of the past had never ceased to tell each individual that he must seek in the Lamb of God purgation from his guilt and confirmation of his personal love of God. The Lamb was to her the very symbol of that confidence in Christ's Redemption which she sought to arouse in each one's breast. On the front of Old St. Peter's, for instance, the Lamb was shown in brilliant mosaic, with the gentle Mother of the Redeemer on its right and the Key-bearer on its left, and this figure, in yet older times, had been preceded by the ancient "*Agnus Dei.*"[1]

Every Litany recited by the faithful in Luther's day, no less than in earlier ages and in our own, concluded with the trustful invocation of the "Lamb of God" ; the waxen "*Agnus Dei,*" blessed by the Pope, and so highly prized by the people, was but its symbol.[2] The Lamb of God was, and still is, solemnly invoked by priest and people in the Canon of the Mass for the obtaining of mercy and peace.

The centre of daily worship in the Catholic Church, in Luther's day as in the remoter past, was ever the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The Lamb of God, which, according to Catholic belief, is there offered to the Father under the mystic elements, and mysteriously renews the sacrifice of the Cross, was as a well, daily opened, in which souls athirst for God might find wherewith to unite themselves in love and confidence with their Redeemer.

[1] See the figures in Grisar, "*Analecta Romana,*" 1, tab. 10–12.

[2] On the origin of the waxen "*Agnus Dei*" and its connection with the oldest baptismal rite, see my art. in the "Civiltà Cattolica," June 2, 1907. From the beginning it was a memorial of the baptismal covenant and served as a constant stimulus to personal union with Christ.

It was Luther who, with cruel hand, tore this pledge of hope and consolation from the heart of Christendom. Inspiring indeed are the allusions to the wealth of consolation contained in the Eucharist, which we find in one of the books in most general use in the days before Luther. "Good Jesus, Eternal Shepherd, thanks be to Thee Who permittest me, poor and needy as I am, to partake of the mystery of Thy Divine Sacrifice, and feedest me with Thy precious Body and Blood; Thou commandest me to approach to Thee with confidence. Come, sayest Thou, to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Confiding, O Lord, in Thy goodness and in Thy great mercy, I come sick to my Saviour, hungry and thirsty to the Fountain of life, needy to the King of Heaven, a servant to my Lord, a creature to my Creator, and one in desolation to my loving Comforter."[1]

The doctrine that the Mass is a renewal of the Sacrifice of Christ "attained its fullest development in the Middle Ages"; thus Adolf Franz at the conclusion of his work "Die Messe im deutschen Mittelalter." At the close of the Middle Ages it was the rule to "direct the eyes of the faithful, during the sacrifice on the altar, to the sufferings and death of the Redeemer in all its touching and thrilling reality. At the altar a mystery is enacted; Christ suffers and dies; the priest represents Him, and every act typifies Christ's Passion; just as He expired on the cross in actual fact, so, mystically, He dies upon the altar."[2] Though some writers of the period dwell perhaps a little too much on the allegorical sense then so popular in explaining the various acts of the Mass, yet, in their conviction that its character was sacrificial and that it truly re-enacted the death of Christ, they were in perfect agreement with the past. In the explanations of the Mass everyone was reminded of his union with Christ; and our Lord's sufferings "were brought before the mind of both priest and people"; by this means the "outward ceremonial of the Mass was made a fruitful source of inward edification." "The abundant mediæval literature on the Mass is a proof both of the needs of the clergy, and of the care displayed by the learned and those in authority, to instruct them. In this matter the 15th century excels the earlier Middle Ages."[3] The very abuses and the formalism which Franz finds witnessed to in certain mediæval sermons on the Mass, chiefly in the matter of undue stress laid on the "fruits of the Mass," reveal merely an over-estimation on the part of the individual of his union with Christ, or a too great assurance of obtaining help in bodily and spiritual necessities; of want of fervour or of hope there is not the least trace.

It is well worthy of note that Luther, if we may believe what he said in a sermon in 1532, even in his monastic days, did not prize or love the close bond of union established with Christ by the daily sacrifice of the Mass: "Ah, bah, Masses! Let what

[1] "*De imit. Christi*," 4, 1, 2.
[2] Freiburg, i/B., 1902, p. 730 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 737 f.

cannot stand fast fall. You never cared about saying Mass formerly; of that I am sure. I know it from my own case; for I too was a holy monk, and blasphemed my dear Lord miserably for the space of quite fifteen years with my saying of Masses, though I never liked doing so, in spite of being so holy and devout."[1]

In spite of this Luther succeeded in bequeathing to posterity the opinion that it was he who delivered people from that "alienation from God" imposed on the world in the Middle Ages; "who broke down the prohibition of the mediæval Church against anyone concerning himself on his own account with matters of religion"; and who gave back "personal religion" to the Christian.

Were Protestants to bestow more attention on the religious literature of the Later Middle Ages, such statements would be simply impossible. One of those best acquainted with this literature writes: "During the last few months the present writer has gone carefully, pen in hand, through more than one hundred printed and manuscript religious works, written in German and belonging to the end of the Middle Ages: catechetical handbooks, general works of piety, confession manuals, postils, prayer-books, booklets on preparation for death and German sermonaries. In this way he has learnt from the most reliable sources not only how in those days people were guided to devout intercourse with God, but also with what fervent piety the faithful were accustomed to converse with their Saviour." Let Protestants, he adds, at least attempt to vindicate their pet assertions "scientifically, i.e. from trustworthy sources."[2]

The relations between the individual and God were by no means suppressed because the priesthood stood as an intermediary between the faithful and God, or because ecclesiastical superiors watched over and directed public worship and the lines along which the life of faith was to move. If the union of the individual with God was endangered by such interference on the part of the clergy, then it was endangered just as much by Luther, who insists so strongly

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 20^2, 2, p. 407.

[2] N. Paulus, "Köln. Volksztng.," 1903, No. 961. Cp. Paulus "Der Katholik," 1898, 2, p. 25: "Had Luther's intention been merely to impress this fundamentally Catholic message on Christendom [the trustful relations between the individual and God] there would never have been a schism."

on the preachers being listened to, and on the ministers taking the lead in things pertaining to God.

He teaches, for instance : " It is an unsufferable blasphemy to reject the public ministry or to say that people can become holy without sermons and Church. This involves a destruction of the Church and rebellion against ecclesiastical order ; such upheavals must be warded off and punished like all other revolts."[1]

The fact is, the ecclesiastical order of things to which Luther attached himself more and more strongly amounted to this, as he declares in various passages of his Table-Talk. Through the ministers and preachers, as through His servants, God speaks to man ; through them God baptises, instructs and absolves ; what the ministers of the Gospel say and do, that God Himself does through and in us as His instruments. Whoever does not believe this, Luther looks on as damned. In a sermon of 1528, speaking of the spiritual authority which intervenes between God and man, he exclaims : " God requires for His Kingdom pious Bishops and pastors, through them he governs His subjects [the Emperor, on the other hand, so he had said, had not even to be a Christian since the secular power was all outward and merely served to restrain evil-doers].[2] If you will not hearken to these Bishops and pastors, then you will have to listen to Master Hans [the hangman] and get no thanks either."[3]

He uses similar language in his sermons on Matthew : " God, by means of Prophets and Apostles, ministers and preachers, baptises, gives the sacraments, preaches and consoles ; without preachers and holy persons, He does nothing, just as He does not govern land and people without the secular power."[4]

Hence Luther shows himself very anxious to establish a kind of hierarchy. If then he charges the priesthood of the past with putting itself between God and man, it is hard to see how he is to avoid a similar charge being brought forward against himself. Moreover, at the bottom of his efforts, memories of his Catholic days were at work, and the feeling that an organised ministry was called for if the religious sentiment was not to die out completely among the people. His practical judgment of the conditions even appears here in a favourable light, for instance, in those passages where he insists on the authority of rightly appointed persons to act as intermediaries between God and man, and as vicars and representatives of Christ. The word Christ spoke on earth and the word of the preacher, are, he says, one and the same " *re et effectu*," because Christ said : " He that heareth you heareth me " (Luke x. 16) ; " God deals with us through these instruments, through them He works everything and offers us all His treasures."[5] Indeed, " it is our

[1] " Corp. ref.," 4, pp. 737–740.
[2] Cp. our vol. ii., p. 297. [3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 418.
[4] " Werke," Erl. ed., 45, p. 184.
[5] Mathesius, " Tischreden " (Kroker), p. 186.

greatest privilege that we have such a ministry and that God is so near to us ; for he that hears Christ hears God Himself ; and he that hears St. Peter or a preacher, hears Christ and God Himself speaking to us."[1]

"We must always esteem the spoken Word very highly, for those who despise it become heretics at once. The Pope despises this ministry"[2] [!]. God, however, "has ordained that no one should have faith, except thanks to the preacher's office," and, "without the Word, He does no work whatever in the Church."[3]

Thus we find Luther, on the one hand insisting upon an authority, and, on the other, demanding freedom for the interpretation of Scripture. How he sought to harmonise the two is reserved for later examination. At any rate, it is to misapprehend both the Catholic Church and Luther's own theological attitude, to say that "independent study of religious questions" had been forbidden in the Middle Ages and was "reintroduced" only by Luther, that he removed the "blinkers" which the Church had placed over people's eyes and that henceforward "the representatives of the Church had no more call to assume the place of the Living God in man's regard."

Luther also laid claim to having revived respect for the secular authorities, who, during the Middle Ages, had been despised owing to the one-sided regard shown to the monks and clergy. He declares that he had again brought people to esteem the earthly calling, family life and all worldly employments as being a true serving of God. Boldly he asserts, that, before my time, "the authorities did not know they were serving God"; "before my time nobody knew . . . what the secular power, what matrimony, parents, children, master, servant, wife or maid really signified." On the strength of his assertions it has been stated, that he revived the "ideal of life" by discovering the "true meaning of vocation," which then became the "common property of the civilised world"; on this account he was "the creator of those theories which form the foundation upon which the modern State and modern civilisation rest."

The fact is, however, the Church of past ages fully

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden" (Kroker), p. 230.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 193, [3] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

recognised the value of the secular state and spheres of activity, saw in them a Divine institution, and respected and cherished them accordingly.

A very high esteem for all secular callings is plainly expressed in the sermons of Johann Herolt, the famous and influential Nuremberg Dominican, whose much-read "*Sermones de tempore et de Sanctis*" (Latin outlines of sermons for the use of German preachers) had, prior to 1500, appeared in at least forty different editions.

"It has been asked," he says in one sermon, "whether the labour of parents for their children is meritorious. I reply: Yes, if only they have the intention of bringing up their children for the glory of God and in order that they may become good servants of Christ. If the parents are in a state of grace, then all their trouble with their children, in suckling them, bathing them, carrying them about, dressing them, feeding them, watching by them, teaching and reproving them, redounds to their eternal reward. All this becomes meritorious. And in the same way when the father labours hard in order to earn bread for his wife and children, all this is meritorious for the life beyond."[1]—A high regard for work is likewise expressed in his sermon "To workmen," which begins with the words: "Man is born to labour as the bird is to fly."[2] Another sermon praises the calling of the merchant, which he calls a "good and necessary profession."[3]

Another witness to the Church's esteem for worldly callings and employments is Marcus von Weida, a Saxon Dominican. In the discourses he delivered on the "Our Father" at Leipzig, in 1501, he says: "All those pray who do some good work and live virtuously." For everything that a man does to the praise and glory of God is really prayer. A man must always do what his state of life and his calling demands. "Hence it follows that many a poor peasant, husbandman, artisan or other man who does his work, or whatever he undertakes, in such a way as to redound to God's glory, is more pleasing to God, by reason of the work he daily performs, and gains more merit before God than any Carthusian or Friar, be he Black, Grey or White, who stands daily in choir singing and praying."[4]

It is evident that Catholic statements, such as that just quoted from Herolt, concerning the care of children being well-pleasing to God, have been overlooked by those who extol Luther as having been the first to discover and teach, that even to rock children's cradles and wash their swaddling clothes is a noble, Christian work. What is, however, most curious is the assurance with which Luther himself claimed the merit of this discovery, in connection with his teaching on marriage.

The Carthusian, Erhard Gross, speaks very finely of the

[1] "Sermo 25 de tempore." [2] "Sermo 55 de tempore."
[3] "Sermones super epistolas dominicales." Sermo 15.
[4] "Eine nutzliche Lere," usw., Leipzig, 1502, c. 1.

different secular callings and states of life, and assigns to them an eminently honourable place: "What are the little precious stones in Christ's crown but the various classes of the Christian people, who adorn the head of Christ? For He is our Head and all the Christian people are His Body for ever and ever. Hence, amongst the ornaments of the house of God some must be virgins, others widows, some married and others chaste, such as monks, priests and nuns. Nor are these all, for we have also Princes, Kings and Prelates who rule the commonwealth, those who provide for the needs of the body, as, for instance, husbandmen and fishermen, tailors and merchants, bakers and shoemakers, and, generally, all tradesmen." If the general welfare is not to suffer, he says, each one must faithfully follow his calling. "Therefore whoever wishes to please God, let him stick to the order [state] in which God has placed him and live virtuously; he will then receive his reward from God here, and, after this life, in the world to come."[1]

Although Luther must have been well aware of the views really held on this subject, some excuse for his wild charges may perhaps be found in his small practical experience, prior to his apostasy, of Christian life in the world. His poverty had forced him, even in childhood, into irregular ways; he had been deprived of the blessings of a truly Christian family-life. His solitary studies had left him a stranger to the active life of good Catholics engaged in secular callings; the fact of his being a monk banished him alike from the society of the bad and impious and from that of the good and virtuous. Thus in many respects he was out of touch with the stimulating influence of the world; the versatility which results from experience was still lacking, when, in his early years at Wittenberg, he began to think out his new theories on God and sin, Grace and the Fall.

"Whoever wishes to please God let him stick to the order [state] in which God has placed him." These words of Gross, the Carthusian, quoted above, remind us of a comparison instituted by Herolt the Dominican between religious Orders and the "Order" of matrimony. Commending the secular calling of matrimony, he says here, that it was instituted by God Himself, whereas the religious Orders had been founded by men: "We must know that

[1] In a "Novelle," published by Ph. Strauch in the "Zeitschr. für deutsches Luthertum," 29, 1885, p. 389.—For further particulars of the respect for worldly callings before Luther's day, see N. Paulus, "Luther und der Beruf" ("Der Katholik," 1902, 1, p .327 ff.), and in the "Lit. Beil. der Köln. Volksztng.," 1903, No. 20, p. 148; likewise Denifle, "Luther," 1^2, p. 138 ff.

God first honoured matrimony by Himself instituting it. In this wise the Order of matrimony excels all other Orders ('*ordo matrimonialis præcellit alios ordines*'); for just as St. Benedict founded the Black Monks, St. Francis the Order of Friars Minor and St. Dominic the Order of Friars Preacher, so God founded matrimony."[1]

True Christian perfection, according to the ancient teaching of the Church, is not bound up with any particular state, but may be attained by all, no matter their profession, even by the married.

Luther, and many after him, even down to the present day, have represented, that, according to the Catholic view, perfection was incapable of attainment save in the religious life, this alone being termed the "state of perfection." In his work "On Monkish Vows" he declares: "The monks have divided Christian life into a state of perfection and one of imperfection. To the great majority they have assigned the state of imperfection, to themselves, that of perfection."[2]

As a matter of fact the "state of perfection" only means, that, religious, by taking upon themselves, publicly and before the Church, the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, bind themselves to strive after perfection along this path as one leading most surely to the goal; it doesn't imply that they are already in possession of perfection, still less that they alone possess it. By undertaking to follow all their life a Rule approved by the Church, under the guidance of Superiors appointed by the Church, they form a "state" or corporation of which perfection is the aim, and, in this sense alone, are said to belong to the "state of perfection." In addition, it was always believed that equal, in fact the highest, perfection might be attained to in any state of life. Though the difficulties to be encountered in the worldly state were regarded as greater, yet the conquest they involved was looked upon as the fruit of an even greater love of God, the victory as more splendid, and the degree of perfection attained as so much the more exalted.

It is the love of God which, according to the constant teaching of the Church, constitutes the essence of perfection.

The most perfect Christian is he who fulfils the law of charity most perfectly, and this—notwithstanding what-

[1] "Sermo 25 de tempore."

[2] "Cp. Hist. Jahrb.," 27, 1906, p. 496 ff. (N. Paulus on O. Scheel).

ever Luther may say—according to what has ever been the teaching of the Church, the ordinary Christian may quite well do in his everyday calling, and in the married as much as in the religious state. Even should the religious follow the severest of Rules, yet if he does not make use of the more abundant means of perfection at his command but lives in tepidity, then the ordinary Christian approaches more closely than he to the ideal standard of life if only he fulfils his duties in the home with greater love of God.

The Bavarian Franciscan, Caspar Schatzgeyer, Luther's contemporary, is right when he says in his work "*Scrutinium divinæ scripturæ*": "We do not set up a twofold standard of perfection, one for people in the world and another for the religious. For all Christians there is but one order, one mode of worshipping God, one evangelical perfection. . . . But we do say this, that in cloistral life the attainment of perfection is easier, though a Christian living in the world may excel all religious in perfection."[1] For—such is the ground he gives in a German work—"it may well happen that in the ordinary Christian state a man runs so hotly and eagerly towards God as to outstrip all religious in all the essentials of Christian perfection, just as a sculptor may with a blunt chisel produce a masterpiece far superior to that carved by an unskilful apprentice even with the best and sharpest of tools."[2]

This may suffice to elucidate the question of the Catholic ideal of life in respect of Luther's statements, a question much debated in recent controversies but not always set in as clear a light as it deserved.

The preceding remarks on Luther's misrepresentations of the Church's teaching concerning worldly callings lead us to consider his utterances on the Church's depreciation of the female sex and of matrimony.

5. Was Luther the Liberator of Womankind from "Mediæval Degradation"?

Luther maintained that he had raised the dignity of woman from the depths to which it had fallen in previous ages and had revived due respect for married life. What the Church had defined on this subject in the past he

[1] Basle, 1522, B. 1′.
[2] "Von dem waren christl. Leben," Bl. C. 3′.

regarded as all rubbish. Indeed, "not one of the Fathers," he says, "ever wrote anything notable or particularly good concerning the married state."[1] But, as in the case of the secular authority and the preaching office, so God, before the coming of the Judgment Day, by His special Grace and through His Word, i.e. through the new Evangel, had restored married life to its rightful dignity, "as He had at first instituted and ordained it." Marriage, so Luther asserts, had been regarded as "a usage and practice rather than as a thing ordained by God. In the same way the secular authorities did not know that they were serving God, but were all tied up in ceremonies. The preaching office, too, was nothing but a sham consisting of cowls, tonsures, oilings," etc.[2]

In short, by his teaching on marriage he had ennobled woman, whereas the Catholics had represented matrimony as an "unchristian" state, only permitted out of necessity, even though they called it a Sacrament.[3]

Conspectus of Luther's Distortion of the Catholic View of Marriage.

Luther based his charges chiefly on the canonical enforcement of clerical celibacy and on the favour shown by the Church to the vow of chastity and the monastic life. How this proved his contention it is not easy to see. Further, he will have it, that the Church taught that true service of God was to be found only in the monastic state, and that vows were a sure warrant of salvation—though, as a matter of fact, neither Church nor theologians had ever said anything of the sort.[4]

In his remarks on this subject in 1527 he openly accused the Papists of saying that "whoever is desirous of having to do with God and spiritual matters must, whether man or woman, remain unmarried," and "thus," so he says, "they have scared the young from matrimony, so that now they are sunk in fornication."[5]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 178. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] What follows has, it is true, no close relation to "Luther and Lying"; the author has, however, thought it right to deal with the matter here because of the connection between Luther's misrepresentations of the Middle Ages and his calumny against Catholic times, both of which were founded, not on the facts of the case, but on personal grounds. Cp. below, p. 147.

[4] Denifle, "Luther und Luthertum," 1^2, p. 71 ff., pp. 155, 238, 242.

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 55.

At first Luther only ventured on the charge, that matrimony had been "*de facto*" forbidden, though it had not actually been declared sinful, by the Pope ;[1] by forbidding the monks to marry he had fulfilled the prophecy in 1 Timothy iv. 1 ff., concerning the latter times, when many would fall away from the faith and forbid people to marry. "The Pope forbids marriage under the semblance of spirituality."[2] "Squire Pope has forbidden marriage, because one had to come who would prohibit marriage. The Pope has made man to be no longer man, and woman to be no longer woman."[3]

As years passed Luther went further ; forgetful of his admission that the Pope had not made matrimony sinful, he exclaimed : To him and to his followers marriage is a sin. The Church had hitherto treated marriage as something "non-Christian";[4] the married state she had "handed over to the devil";[5] her theologians look down on it as a "low, immoral sort of life,"[6] and her religious can only renounce it on the ground that it is a kind of legalised "incontinence."[7]

In reality, however, religious, when taking their vow, merely acted on the Christian principle which St. Augustine expresses as follows : Although "all chastity, conjugal as well as virginal, has its merit in God's sight," yet, "the latter is higher, the former less exalted."[8] They merely renounced a less perfect state for one more perfect ; they could, moreover, appeal not only to 1 Cor. vii. 33, where the Apostle speaks in praise of the greater freedom for serving God which the celibate state affords, but even to Luther himself who, in 1523, had interpreted this very passage in the same sense, and that with no little warmth.[9]

His later and still more extravagant statements concerning the Catholic view of marriage can hardly be taken seriously ; his perversion of the truth is altogether too great.

He says, that married people had not been aware that God "had ordained" that state, until at last God, by His special Grace, and before the Judgment Day, had restored the dignity of matrimony no less than that of the secular authority and the preaching office, "through His Word [i.e. through Luther's preaching]." The blame for this state of things went back very

[1] Cp. Denifle, *ibid.*, p. 239 f.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 152 ; Erl. ed., 28, p. 194. "Wyder den falsch genantten geystlichen Standt."

[3] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 14, p. 157. [4] *Ibid.*, 24, p. 123 f. [5] *Ibid.*, 27, p. 26.

[6] "Werke." Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 92. [7] *Ibid.*, 31, p. 297.

[8] Sermo 343, n. 7 ; Denifle, 1^2, p. 243, refers also to "De bono coniugali," n. 9, 27, 28.

[9] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 138 f. : "A married man cannot give himself up entirely to reading and prayer, but is, as St. Paul says, 'divided' and must devote a great part of his life to pleasing his spouse." The Apostle says that though the "troubles and cares of the married state are good, yet it is far better to be free to pray and attend to the Word of God."—Luther is more silent concerning our Lord's own recommendation of virginity ("*Non omnes capiunt verbum istud, sed quibus datum est*," etc., Mat. xix. 11 f.). Of his attitude towards voluntary virginity we have already spoken in vol. iii., 246 ff.

far, for the Fathers, like Jerome, "had seen in matrimony mere sensuality," and for this reason had disparaged it.[1]

The Prophet Daniel had foreseen the degradation of marriage under the Papacy: It is of the Papal Antichrist "that Daniel says [xi. 37], that he will wallow in the unnatural vice which is the recompense due to contemners of God (Rom. i. [27]), in what we call Italian weddings and silent sin. For matrimony and a right love and use of women he shall not know. Such are the horrible abominations prevailing under Pope and Turk."[2] "The same prophet," he writes elsewhere, "says that Antichrist shall stand on two pillars, viz.: idolatry and celibacy. The idol he calls Mausim, thus using the very letters which form the word Mass." The Pope had deluded people, on the one hand by the Mass, and, on the other, "by celibacy, or the unmarried state, fooling the whole world with a semblance of sanctity. These are the two pillars on which the Papacy rests, like the house of the Philistines in Samson's time. If God chose to make Luther play the part of Samson, lay hold on the pillars and shake them, so that the house fall on the whole multitude, who could take it ill? He is God and wonderful are His ways."[3]

Luther appeals expressly to the Pope's "books" in which marriage is spoken of as a "sinful state."[4] The Papists, when they termed marriage a sacrament, were only speaking "out of a false heart," and trying to conceal the fact that they really looked on it as "fornication."[5] "They have turned all the words and acts of married people into mortal sins, and I myself, when I was a monk, shared the same opinion, viz. that the married state was a damnable state."[6]

This alone was wanting to fill up the measure of his falsehoods. One wonders whether Luther, when putting forward statements so incredible, never foresaw that his own earlier writings might be examined and his later statements challenged in their light? Certainly the contradiction between the two is patent. We have only to glance at his explanation of the fourth and sixth Commandments in his work on the Ten Commandments, published in 1518, to learn from Luther himself what Catholics really thought of marriage, and to be convinced that it was anything but despised; there, as in other of his early writings, Luther indeed esteems virginity above marriage, but to term the latter sinful and damnable never occurred to him.

The olden Church had painted an ideal picture of the virgin. By this, though not alone by this, she voiced her respect for woman, from that Christian standpoint which differs so much from that of the world. From the earliest

[1] "Werke.," Erl. ed., 61, p. 178 (Table-Talk).
[2] *Ibid.*, 64, p. 155. From his glosses on the Bible.
[3] *Ibid.*, 31, p. 390. From the "Winckelmesse," 1534.
[4] *Ibid.*, 44, p. 376. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 25^2, p. 432; cp. p. 428.
[6] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 6, p. 283: "*Ipse ego, cum essem adhuc monachus, idem sapiebam, coniugium esse damnatum genus vitæ.*"

times she, like the Gospel and the Apostle of the Gentiles, set up voluntary virginity as a praiseworthy state of life. Hereby she awakened in the female sex a noble emulation for virtue, in particular for seclusion, purity and morality—woman's finest ornaments—and amongst men a high respect for woman, upon whom, even in the wedded state, the ideal of chastity cast a radiance which subdued the impulse of passion. Virgin and mother alike were recommended by the Church to see their model and their guide in the Virgin Mother of our Saviour. Where true devotion to Mary flourished the female sex possessed a guarantee of its dignity, from both the religious and the human point of view, a pledge of enduring respect and honour.

How the Church of olden days continued to prize matrimony and to view it in the light of a true Sacrament is evident from the whole literature of the Middle Ages. Such being its teaching it is incomprehensible how a well-known Protestant encyclopædia, as late as 1898, could still venture to say: "As against the contempt for marriage displayed in both religious and secular circles, and to counteract the immorality to which this had given rise, Luther vindicated the honour of matrimony and placed it in an entirely new light."

In those days Postils enjoyed a wider circulation than any other popular works. The Postils, however, do not teach "contempt of marriage," but quite the contrary. "The Mirror of Human Conduct," published at Augsburg in 1476, indeed gives the first place to virginity, but declares: "Marriage is good and holy," and must not be either despised or rejected; those who "are mated in matrimony" must not imagine that the maids (virgins) alone are God's elect; "Christ praises marriage, for it is a holy state of life in which many a man becomes holy, for marriage was instituted by our Lord in Paradise"; from Christ's presence at the marriage at Cana we may infer that "the married life is a holy life."

Other works containing the same teaching are the "Evangelibuch," e.g. in the Augsburg edition of 1487, the "Postils on the Four Gospels throughout the year," by Geiler of Kaysersberg († 1510), issued by Heinrich Wessmer at Strasburg in 1522, and the important Basle "Plenarium" of 1514, in which the author, a monk, writes: "The conjugal state is to be held in high respect on account of the honour done to it by God"; he also appends some excellent instructions on the duties of married people, concluding with a reference to the story of Tobias "which you will find in the Bible" (which, accordingly, he assumed was open to his readers).

The "Marriage-booklets" of the close of the Middle Ages form a literary group apart. One of the best is "Ein nützlich Lehre und Predigt, wie sich zwei Menschen in dem Sacrament der Ehe halten sollen," which was in existence in MS. as early as 1456. "God Himself instituted marriage," it tells us, "when He said, 'Be fruitful and multiply!' The Orders, however, were founded by Bernard, Augustine, Benedict and Dominic; thus the command of God is greater than that of the teacher," i.e. the Sacrament excels all Rules made by men, even by Saints. It also gives a touching account of how marriage is founded on love and sustained by it.[1]

Another matrimonial handbook, composed by Albert von Eyb, a Franconian cleric, and printed at Augsburg in 1472, lavishes praise on "holy, divine matrimony" without, however, neglecting to award still higher encomium to the state of virginity. Erhard Gross, the Nuremberg Carthusian, about the middle of the 15th century, wrote a "Novel" containing good advice for married people.[2] The hero, who was at first desirous of remaining unmarried, declares: "You must not think that I condemn matrimony, for it is holy and was established by God."[3]

Among the unprinted matrimonial handbooks dating from the period before Luther's time, and containing a like favourable teaching on marriage, are the "Booklet on the Rule of Holy Matrimony,"[4] "On the Sacrament of Matrimony,"[5] and the excellent "Mirror of the Matrimonial Order," by the Dominican Marcus von Weida.[6] Fr. A. Ebert, the Protestant bibliographer, remarks of the latter's writings: "They effectually traverse the charges with which self-complacent ignorance loves to overwhelm the ages previous to the Saxon Reformation," and what he says applies particularly to the teaching on marriage.[7]

To come now to the preachers. We must first mention Johann Herolt, concerning whose influence a recent Protestant writer aptly remarks, that his "wisdom had been listened to by thousands."[8] The passage already given, in which he describes marriage as an Order instituted by Christ (p. 129 f.), is but one instance of his many apt and beautiful sayings. In the very next sermon Herolt treats of the preparation which so great a Sacrament demands. In the same way that people prepare themselves for their Easter Communion, so they, bride and bridegroom, must prepare themselves for matrimony by contrition and confession; for "marriage is as much a Sacrament as the Eucharist."

[1] And yet a Protestant has said quite recently: "The Church persistently taught that love had nothing to do with marriage." As though the restraining of sexual love within just limits was equivalent to the exclusion of conjugal love.

[2] Ed. Ph. Strauch, "Zeitschr. für deutsches Altertum," 29, 1885, pp. 373–427.

[3] P. 385.

[4] Munich State Library, cod. germ., 757.

[5] *Ibid.*, cod. 756.

[6] Heinemann, "Die Handschriften der Herzogl. Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel," 2, 4, p. 332 f.

[7] "Überlieferungen zur Gesch.," etc., 1, 2, p. 204 f.

[8] "N. kirchl. Zeitschr.," 3, 1892, p. 487.

A similar view prevailed throughout Christendom.

One of the most popular of Italian preachers was Gabriel Barletta, who died shortly after 1480. Amongst his writings there is a Lenten sermon entitled: "*De amore conjugali vel de laudibus mulierum.*" In this he speaks of the "cordial love" which unites the married couple. He points out that marriage was instituted in Paradise and confirmed anew by Christ. Explaining the meaning of the ring, he finds that it signifies four things, all of which tend to render Christian marriage praiseworthy. He declares that a good wife may prove an inestimable treasure. If he dwells rather too much on woman's physical and mental inferiority, this does not prevent him from extolling the strength of the woman who is upheld by Christian virtue, and who often succeeds in procuring the amendment of a godless husband.[1]

Barletta, in his sermons, frequently follows the example of his brother friar, the English Dominican preacher, Robert Holkot († 1349), whose works were much in request at the close of the Middle Ages.[2] Holkot had such respect for Christian matrimony, that he applies to it the words of the Bible: "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory; for the memory thereof is immortal." Since the "*actus matrimonialis*" was willed by God, it must be assumed, he says, that it can be accomplished virtuously and with merit.[3] If the intention of the married couple is the begetting of children for the glory of God, they perform an act of the virtue of religion; they also exercise the virtue of justice if they have the intention of mutually fulfilling the conjugal duties to which they have pledged themselves. According to him, mutual love is the principal duty of the married couple.[4] Franz Falk has dwelt in detail on the testimony borne by the Late Middle Ages to the dignity of marriage.[5]

[1] "Sermones Fratris Barlete," Brixie, 1497 and 1498, several times republished in the 16th century. See sermon for the Friday of the fourth week of Lent.

[2] "*Opus super Sapientiam Salomonis*," ed. Hagenau, 1494 (and elsewhere), "*Lectio*" 43 and 44, on Marriage. Cp. *ibid.*, 181, the "*Lectio*" on the Valiant Woman, and in his work, "*In Proverbia Salomonis explanationes*," Paris, 1510, "*Lectio*" 91, with the explanation of Prov. xii. 4: "A diligent woman is a crown to her husband."

[3] Luther, on the other hand, declares: "The work of begetting children was not distinguished from other sins, such as fornication and adultery. But now we have learnt and are assured by the Grace of God that marriage is honourable." "Opp. lat. exeg.," 7, p. 116.

[4] On Barletta and Holkot, cp. N. Paulus in "Lit. Beil. der Köln. Volksztng.," 1904, Nos. 19 and 20; and his art., "Die Ehe in den deutschen Postillen des ausgehenden MA.," and "Gedruckte und Ungedruckte deutsche Ehebüchlein des ausgehenden MA.," *ibid.*, 1903, Nos. 18 and 20. See also F(alk) in "Der Katholik," 1906, 2, p. 317 ff.: "Ehe und Ehestand im MA.," and in the work about to be quoted. Denifle, "Luther," 1, has much to say of the Catholic and the Lutheran views of marriage.

[5] "Die Ehe am Ausgange des MA., Eine Kirchen- und kulturhist. Studie," 1908 ("Erläut. und Ergänz. zu Janssens Gesch. des d. Volkes," 6, Hft. 4).

Commencing with the prayers of the marriage-service and the blessing of the ring, the prayers for those with child and in childbed, and for the churching of women, he goes on to deal with the civil rights pertaining to the married state and with the Church's opinion as witnessed to in the matrimonial handbooks and books of instruction and edification. With the respect for the Sacrament and the dignity of the married woman there found expressed, Falk compares the sentiments likewise found in the prose "novels" and so-called "Volksbücher," and, still more practically expressed, in the numerous endowments and donations for the provision of bridal outfits. "It is quite incomprehensible," such is the author's conclusion, "how non-Catholic writers even to the present time can have ventured to reproach the Church with want of regard for the married state."[1] Of the information concerning bridal outfits, he says, for instance: "The above collection of facts, a real '*nubes testium*,' will sufficiently demonstrate what a task the Church of the Middle Ages here fulfilled towards her servants and children. . . . Many other such foundations may, moreover, have escaped our notice owing to absence of the deeds which have either not been printed or have perished. From the 16th century onwards records of such foundations become scarce."[2]

In the "Internationale Wochenschrift" Heinrich Finke pointed out that he had examined hundreds of Late-mediæval sermons on the position of women, with the result, that "it is impossible to discover in them any contempt for woman."[3] The fact is, that "there exist countless statements of the sanctity of marriage and its sacramental character . . . statements drawn from theologians of the highest standing, Fathers, Saints and Doctors of the Church. Indeed, towards the close of the Middle Ages, they grow still more numerous. The most popular of the monks, whether Franciscans or Dominicans, have left us matrimonial handbooks which imply the existence of that simple, happy family life they depict and encourage."[4] Finke recalls the 15th-century theologian, Raymond of Sabunde, who points out how union with God in love may be reproduced in marriage. Countless theologians are at one with him here, and follow Scripture in representing the union of Christ with the Church as an exalted figure of the marriage-bond between man and wife (Eph. v. 25, 32). Of the respect which the ancient Church exhibited towards women Finke declares: "Never has the praise of women been sung more loudly than in the sermons of the Fathers and in the theological tractates of the Schoolmen." Here "one picture follows another, each more dazzling than the last."[5] Certainly we must admit, as he does, that it is for the most part the ideal of virginity which inspires them, and that it

[1] "Die Ehe am Ausgange des MA., Eine Kirchen- und kulturhist. Studie," 1908 ("Erläut. und Ergänz. zu Janssens Gesch. des d. Volkes," 6, Hft. 4), p. 67.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[3] "Die Stellung der Frau im MA.," Oct. 1 and 8, 1910, p. 1253.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 1299.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 1248.

is the good, chaste, virtuous wife and widow whom they extol, rather than woman *qua* woman, as a noble part of God's creation. Their vocation as spiritual teachers naturally explains this; and if, for the same cause, they seem to be very severe in their strictures on feminine faults, or to strike harsh notes in their warnings on the spiritual dangers of too free intercourse with the female sex, this must not be looked upon as "hatred of women," as has been done erroneously on the strength of some such passages in the case of St. Antoninus of Florence and Cardinal Dominici.[1]

"Just as Church and Councils energetically took the side of marriage" when it was decried in certain circles,[2] so the accusation of recent times that, in the Middle Ages, woman was universally looked upon with contempt, cannot stand; according to Finke this was not the case, even in "ascetical circles," and "still less elsewhere."[3] The author adduces facts which "utterly disprove any such general disdain for woman."[4]

The splendid Scriptural eulogy with which the Church so frequently honours women in her liturgy, might, one would think, be in itself sufficient. To the married woman who fulfils her duties in the home out of true love for God, and with zeal and assiduity, the Church, in the Mass appointed for the Feasts of

[1] Cp. F. Schaub, "Hist. Jahrb.," 26, 1905, p. 117 ff., on H. Crohns, who, in order to accuse St. Antoninus and others of "hatred of women," appeals to the "Witches' Hammer": "It is unjust to make these authors responsible for the consequences drawn from their utterances by such petty fry as the producers of the 'Witches' Hammer.'" Cp. Paulus, "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 134, 1904, particularly p. 812 ff.

[2] Finke, *ibid.*, p. 1249. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 1256.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 1258.—Finke's statements may be completed by the assurance that full justice was done to marriage by both theologians and liturgical books, and that not merely "traces" but the clearest proofs exist, that "mutual help" was placed in the foreground as the aim of marriage. Details on this point are contained in Denifle's "Luther und Luthertum," 1^2, p. 254 ff. The following remark by a writer, so deeply versed in mediæval Scholasticism, is worthy of note: "There is not a single Schoolman of any standing, who, on this point [esteem for marriage in the higher sense], is at variance with Hugo of St. Victor, the Lombard, or ecclesiastical tradition generally. Though there may be differences in minor points, yet all are agreed concerning the lawfulness, goodness, dignity and holiness of marriage" (p. 261). "It is absolutely ludicrous, nay, borders on imbecility," he says (*ibid.*) with characteristic indignation, "that Luther should think it necessary to tell the Papists that Adam and Eve were united according to the ordinance and institution of God" ("Opp. lat. exeg.," 4, p. 70). He laments that Luther's assertions concerning the contempt of Catholics for marriage should have left their trace in the Symbolic Books of Protestantism ("Confess. August.," art. 16, "Symb. Bücher [10]," ed. Müller-Kolde, p. 42), and exclaims: "Surely it is time for such rubbish to be too much even for Protestants." Jos. Löhr ("Methodisch-kritische Beitr. zur Gesch. der Sittlichkeit des Klerus, bes. der Erzdiözese Köln am Ausgang des MA.," 1911, "Reformationsgeschichtl. Studien und Texte," Hft. 17, pp. 77–84) has dealt with the same matter, but in a more peaceful tone.

Holy Women, applies the words of Proverbs :[1] "The price of the valiant woman is as of things brought from afar and from the uttermost coasts. The heart of her husband trusteth in her . . . she will render him good and not evil all the days of her life. She hath sought wool and flax and hath wrought by the counsel of her hands. . . . Her husband is honourable in the gates when he sitteth among the senators of the land. . . . Strength and beauty are her clothing, and she shall laugh in the latter day. She hath opened her mouth to wisdom. . . . Her children rose up and called her blessed, her husband, and he praised her. . . . The woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."—Elsewhere the liturgy quotes the Psalmist :[2] "Grace is poured abroad from thy lips," "With thy comeliness and thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously and reign. . . . Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

It cannot be objected that the ordinary woman, in the exercise of her household duties and of a humbler type of virtue, had no part in this praise. On the contrary, in honouring these Saints the Church was at the same time honouring all women who had not, by their misconduct, rendered themselves unworthy of the name. To all, whatever their rank or station, the high standard of the Saints was displayed, and all were invited to follow their example and promised their intercession. At the foot of the altar all were united, for their mother, the Church, showed to all the same consideration and helpful love. The honours bestowed upon the heroines of the married state had its influence on their living sisters, just as the Church's "undying respect for virginity was calculated to exercise a wholesome effect on those bound by the marriage tie, or about to be so bound."[3]

In Luther's own case we have an instance in the devotion he showed in his youth to St. Anne, who was greatly venerated by both men and women in late mediæval times. The vow he had made to enter the cloister he placed in the hands of this Saint. The liturgical praise to which we have just listened, and which is bestowed on her in common with other holy spouses, he repeated frequently enough as a monk, when saying Mass, and the words of the Holy Ghost in praise of the true love of the faithful helpmate he ever treasured in his memory.[4]

[1] Prov. xxxi. 10 f. : "*Mulierem fortem quis inveniet ?*" etc. The Lesson of the Mass *De communi nec virginum nec martyrum.*

[2] The Gradual of the same Mass, taken from Psalm xliv.

[3] Falk, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

[4] Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 207 (Table-Talk). In his translation of the Bible Luther quotes the German verse : "Nought so dear on earth as the love of woman to the man who shares it" ("Werke," Erl. ed., 64, p. 113), in connection with Proverbs xxxi. 10 ff. ("*Mulierem fortem*," etc.). In the Table-Talk he quotes the same when speaking of those who are unfaithful to their marriage vow in not praying : "People do not pray. Therefore my hostess at Eisenach [Ursula, Cunz Cotta's wife, see vol. i., p. 5 f., and vol. iii., p. 288 f.] was right in

How well Luther succeeded in establishing the fable of the scorn in which the married state was held in the Middle Ages is evident from several recent utterances of learned Protestants.

One Church historian goes so far, in his vindication of the Reformer's statements concerning the mediæval "contempt felt for womankind," as actually to lay the blame for Luther's sanction of polygamy on the low, "mediæval view of the nature of matrimony." Another theologian, a conservative, fancies that he can, even to-day, detect among "Romanists" the results of the mediæval undervaluing of marriage. According to Catholics "marriage is not indeed forbidden to everyone—for otherwise where would the Church find new children?—but nevertheless is looked at askance as a necessary evil." Perfection in Catholic theory consists in absolute ignorance of all that concerns marriage. One scholar declares the Church before Luther's day had taught, that "marriage had nothing to do with love"; "of the ethical task [of marriage] and of love not a trace is to be found" in the teaching of the Middle Ages. An eminent worker in the field of the history of dogma also declares, in a recent edition of his work, that, before Luther's day, marriage had been "a sort of concession to the weak"; thanks only to Luther, was it "freed from all ecclesiastical tutelage to become the union of the sexes, as instituted *by God* [his italics], and the school of highest morality." Such assertions, only too commonly met with, are merely the outcome of the false ideas disseminated by Luther himself concerning the Church of olden days. The author of the fable that woman and marriage were disdained in the Middle Ages scored a success, of which, could he have foreseen it, he would doubtless have been proud.

Two publications by Professors of the University of Wittenberg have been taken as clear proof of how low an opinion the Catholic Middle Ages had of woman and marriage. Of these publications one, however, a skit on the devil in Andr. Meinhardi's Latin Dialogues of 1508—which, of the two, would, in this respect, be the most incriminating—has absolutely nothing to do with the mediæval Church's views on marriage, but simply reproduces those of the Italian Humanists, though revealing that their influence extended even as far as Germany. It tells how even the devil himself was unable to put up with matrimony; since the difficulties of this state are so great, one of the speakers makes up his mind "never to marry, so as to be the better able to devote himself to study." Despite this the author of the Dialogue entered the married state. The other publication is a discourse, in 1508, by Christopher Scheurl, containing a frivolous witticism at the expense of women, likewise due to Italian influence. This, however, did not prevent Scheurl, too, from

saying to me when I went to school there: 'There is no dearer thing on earth than the love of woman to the man on whom it is bestowed'" ("Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 212). Luther's introduction of the phrase in connection with the passage on the "*Mulier fortis*" was an injustice, and an attempt to prove again the alleged contempt of Catholicism for the love of woman.

marrying.[1] The truth is that the Italian Humanists' "favourite subjects are the relations between the sexes, treated with the crudest realism, and, in connection with this, attacks on marriage and the family."[2] At the same time it cannot be denied that individual writers, men influenced by anti-clerical Humanism, or ascetical theologians knowing nothing of the world, did sometimes speak of marriage in a manner scarcely fair to woman and did occasionally unduly exalt the state of celibacy.

Against such assertions some of Luther's finest sayings on woman's dignity deserve to be pitted.

Luther's Discordant Utterances on the Value of Marriage in his Sermons and Writings.

Any objective examination of Luther's attitude towards woman and marriage must reveal the fact, that he frequently seeks to invest Christian marriage, as he conceived it, with a religious character and a spiritual dignity. This he does in language witty and sympathetic, representing it as a close bond of love, though devoid of any sacramental character. Nor does he hesitate to use the noble imagery of the Church when describing his substitute for the Christian marriage of the past.

"It is no small honour for the married state," he says in a sermon of 1536, "that God should represent it under the type and figure of the unspeakable grace and love which He manifests and bestows on us in Christ, and as the surest and most gracious sign of the intimate union between Himself and Christendom and all its members, a union than which nothing more intimate can be imagined."[3]

In another sermon he praises the edification provided in the married state, when "man and wife are united in love and serve each other faithfully"; Luther invites them to thank God "that the married state is profitable alike to body, property, honour and salvation." "What, however, is best of all in married life," so he insists, "for the sake of which everything must be suffered and endured, is that God may give offspring and command us to train it in His service. This is earth's noblest and most priceless work, because God loves nothing so well as to save souls."[4]

[1] N. Paulus, "Zur angeblichen Geringschätzung der Frau und der Ehe im MA.," in the "Wissensch. Beil. zur Germania," 1904, Nos. 10 and 12.

[2] Pastor, "Hist. of the Popes" (Eng. Trans.), 5, p. 119.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 19^2, p. 246 f. [4] *Ibid.*, 16^2, p. 536 ff.

Such exhortations of Luther's, apart from peculiarities of expression, differ from those of earlier writers only in that those authors, relying on the traditional, sacramental conception of the matrimonial union, had an even greater right to eulogise marriage and the blessing of children.

Catholic preachers might quite profitably have made use of the greater part of a wedding discourse delivered by Luther in 1531,[1] though they might have failed to emulate the force and emphasis with which it was uttered. His theme there is "that marriage is to be held in honour"; he quotes Hebr. xiii. 4, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled"; he continues: "It is true that our flesh is full of evil lusts which entice us to sin, but to these we must not consent; if, however, you hold fast to the Word of God and see to it, that this state is blessed and adorned, this will preserve and comfort you, and make of it a holy state for you."[2] It was necessary, he continues, not merely to fight against any sensual lusts outside of the marriage bond, but also to cultivate virtue. Conjugal fidelity must be preserved all the more carefully since "Satan is your enemy and your flesh wanton." "Fornication and adultery are the real stains which defile the marriage bed." "Married persons are embraced in the Word of God." This they must take as their guide, otherwise (here Luther's language ceases to be a pattern) "the bed is soiled, and, practically, they might as well have passed their motions in it."[3]

Such an emphasising of the religious side of matrimony almost gives the impression, that Luther was following an interior impulse which urged him to counteract the effects of certain other statements of his on marriage. Doubtless he felt the contrast between his worldly view of matrimony and the higher standard of antiquity, though he would certainly have refused to admit that he was behindhand in the struggle against sensuality. In view of the sad moral consequences which were bearing witness against him, he was disposed to welcome an opportunity to give expression to such sentiments as those just described, which tended to justify him both to his listeners and to himself. Nor were such sentiments mere hypocrisy; on the contrary, they have their psychological place as a true component part of his picture. On one occasion Luther bewails the want of attention paid to his excellent doctrines: "The teachers are there, but the doers are nowhere to be found; as with the other points of our doctrine, there are but few who obey or heed us."[4]

Not infrequently, however, instead of praising the dignity of woman and the purity of married life, Luther speaks in a far from respectful, nay, offensive manner of woman, though without perhaps meaning all that his words would

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 1, p. 51 ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 58. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 68.
[4] *Ibid.*, 30, 3, p. 278; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 6. "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," 1531.

seem to convey. He thereby exposes woman, in her relations with man, to the danger of contempt, and thus forfeits the right of posing as the defender of feminine dignity and of the married state against alleged detractors among the Catholics. His false aspersions on former days thus stand out in a still more unpleasant light.

In a sermon of 1524, where it is true he has some fine words on the indulgent treatment to be meted out to the wife, he says: St. Peter calls woman the "weaker vessel" (1 Peter iii. 7); he "had given faint praise to woman," for "woman's body is not strong and her spirit, as a general rule, is even weaker; whether she is wild or mild depends on God's choice of man's helpmate. Woman is half a child; whoever takes a wife must look upon himself as the guardian of a child. . . . She is also a crazy beast. Recognise her weakness. If she does not always follow the straight path, bear with her frailty. A woman will ever remain a woman. . . . But the married state is nevertheless the best, because God is there with His Word and Work and Cross."[1]

With those who complain of the sufferings of the mother in pregnancy and childbirth he is very angry, and, in one sermon, goes so far as to say: "Even though they grow weary and wear themselves out with child-bearing, that is of no consequence; let them go on bearing children till they die, that is what they are there for."[2]

His description of marriage "as an outward, material thing, like any other worldly business,[3] was certainly not calculated to raise its repute; and in the same passage he proceeds: "Just as I may eat and drink, sleep and walk, ride, talk and do business with a heathen or a Jew, a Turk or a heretic, so also I may contract marriage with him."[4]

Matrimonial cases had formerly belonged to the ecclesiastical courts, but Luther now drives the parties concerned to the secular judge, telling them that he will give them "a good hog," i.e. a sound trouncing, for having sought to "involve and entangle him in such matters" which "really concerned the secular authority."[5] "Marriage questions,"

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 420.

[2] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 538.

[3] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 283; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 519. Cp. present work, vol. iii., p. 263 and p. 241 ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 61, p. 205 (Table-Talk).

[5] Cp. the passages in the Table-Talk on marriage and on women, "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, pp. 182–213, and 57, pp. 270–273.

he says, " do not touch the conscience, but come within the province of the secular judge."[1] Previously, parties whose rights had been infringed were able to seek redress from the ecclesiastical tribunals, the sentences of which were enforced by Canon Law under spiritual penalties, to the advantage of the injured party. Luther, on the other hand, after having secularised marriage, finds himself unable to cope with the flood of people clamouring for justice : " I am tired of them [the matrimonial squabbles] and I have thrown them overboard ; let them do as they like in the name of all the devils."[2] He is also determined to rid the preachers of this business ; the injured parties are, he says, to seek for justice and protection " in the latrines of the lawyers " ; his own conduct, he hopes, will serve as a model to the preachers, who will now repel all who solicit their help.[3]

The increase in the number of matrimonial misunderstandings and quarrels, the haste with which marriage was entered upon and then dissolved, particularly in the Saxon Electorate and at Wittenberg, was not merely the result of the new Evangelical freedom, as Luther and his friends sadly admitted, but was due above all to the altered views on marriage. In the new preaching on marriage the gratification of the sensual impulse was, as will be shown below, placed too much in the foreground, owing partly to the fanatical reaction against clerical celibacy and religious vows. " To marry is a remedy for fornication " ; these words of Luther's were again and again repeated by himself and others in one form or another, as though they characterised the main object of marriage. Nature was persistently painted as excessively weak in the matter of chastity, and as quite captive under the yoke of passion. People were indeed admonished to curb their passions with the help of Grace, but such means of acquiring God's Grace as mortification and self-conquest were only too frequently scoffed at as mere holiness-by-works, while as for the means of grace sought by Catholics in the Sacraments, they had simply been " abolished."

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 205.

[2] " Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 25. Cp. Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 121 ; " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 421 ; 2, p. 368. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 440.

[3] " Briefwechsel," 10, p. 266 : " *reicio . . . ubi possum.*" There are, however, some instances of sympathy and help being forthcoming.

By his patronage of polygamy, forced on him by his wrong interpretation of the Bible, Luther put the crowning touch on his contempt for Christian marriage.[1] This was to relinquish the position of privilege in which Christianity had established marriage, when, following the Creator's intention, it insisted on monogamy.

Birth of the New Views on Marriage during the Controversy on the Vow of Chastity.

How did Luther reach his opinion and succeed in endowing it with credibility and life? A glance at its birth and growth will give us an instructive insight into Luther's manner of proceeding.

He had already long been engaged in his struggle with "Popish abuses" and had already set up all the essential points of his new theology, before becoming in the least conscious of the supposed contempt in which marriage was held by the Roman Church. In his exposition of the Ten Commandments, in 1518, he still speaks of it in the respectful language of his earlier years; in his sermon on the Married State, in 1519, he still terms it a Sacrament, without hinting in any way that it had hitherto been considered disreputable. Whether he uses the term Sacrament in its traditional meaning we do not, of course, know. At any rate, he says: "Matrimony is a Sacrament, an outward, holy sign of the greatest, most sacred, worthy and exalted thing that ever has been, or ever will be, viz. of the union of the Divine and human nature in Christ."[2] Enumerating the spiritual advantages of marriage, which counteract the "sinful lusts therewith intermingled," he expressly appeals to the "Doctors" of the Church, and the three benefits they perceived in matrimony; "first, marriage is a Sacrament," "secondly, it is a bond of fidelity," "thirdly, it brings offspring, which is the end and principal office of marriage"; a further benefit must be added, viz. the "training of the offspring in the service of God."[3]

In his book "On the Babylonish Captivity" (1520) he has already arrived at the explicit denial to marriage of the name and character of a sacrament.

[1] See above, pp. 3 ff., 13 ff., and vol. iii., 259 ff.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 168; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 63. Second edition of the Sermon.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 168 f.=63 f.

But it was only in the war he waged against his own vow of chastity that the idea arose in his mind, and even then only gradually, that the true value and excellence of marriage had never hitherto been recognised. The more he sought for theological grounds on which to prove the worthlessness of religious celibacy and the nullity of the vow of chastity, the more deeply he persuaded himself that proofs existed in abundance of the utter perversity of the prevailing opinions on matrimony. He began to impute to the Church extravagant views on virginity, of which neither he nor anyone else had ever thought. He now accused her of teaching the following: That virginity was the only state in which God could be served perfectly; that marriage was forbidden to the clergy because it was disreputable and a thing soiled with sin; finally, that family life with its petty tasks must be regarded as something degrading, while woman herself, to whom the chief share in these tasks belongs and who, moreover, so often tempts man to sins of incontinence, is a contemptible creature.

All these untruths concerning the ancient Church were purely the outcome of Luther's personal polemics.

His system of attack exhibits no trace of any dispassionate examination of the testimonies of antiquity. But his false and revolting charges seemed some sort of justification for his attack on religious vows and clerical celibacy. From such theoretical charges there was but a step to charges of a more practical character and to his boundless exaggerations concerning the hideous vices supposed to have been engendered by the perversion of the divinely appointed order, and to have devastated the Church as a chastisement for her contempt for marriage.

In the second edition of the sermon of 1519 on the Married State he places virginity on at least an equal footing with matrimony. Towards the end of the sermon he (like the earlier writers) calls matrimony "a noble, exalted and blessed state" if rightly observed, but otherwise "a wretched, fearful and dangerous" one; he proceeds: Whoever bears this in mind "will know what to think of the sting of the flesh, and, possibly, will be as ready to accept the virginal state as the conjugal."[1] Even during his

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 170; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 66.

Wartburg days, when under the influence of the burning spirit of revolt, and already straining at the vows which bound him, he still declared in the theses he sent Melanchthon, that "Marriage is good, but virginity better" ("*Bonum coniugium, melior virginitas*"),[1] a thesis, which, like St. Paul, he bases mainly on the immunity from worldly cares. This idea impressed Melanchthon so deeply, that he re-echoes it in his praise of virginity in the "Apology for the Confession of Augsburg": "We do not make virginity and marriage equal. For, as one gift is better than another, prophecy better than eloquence, strategy better than agriculture, eloquence better than architecture, so virginity is a gift excelling marriage."[2]

But this great gift, to Luther's mind, was a moral impossibility, the rarest of God's Graces, nay, a "miracle" of the Almighty. Hence he teaches that such a privilege must not be laid claim to, that the monastic vow of chastity was therefore utterly immoral, and clerical celibacy too, to say nothing of private vows of virginity; in all such there lurked a presumptuous demand for the rarest and most marvellous of Divine Graces; even to pray for this was not allowed.

At the conclusion of his theses for Melanchthon, Luther enforces what he had said by the vilest calumnies against all who, in the name of the Church, had pledged themselves to remain unmarried. Were it known what manner of persons those who profess such great chastity really are, their "greatly extolled chastity" would not be considered fit "for a prostitute to wipe her boots on."

Then follow his further unhappy outbursts at the Wartburg on religious vows (vol. ii., p. 83 ff.) consummating his perversion of the Church's teaching and practice regarding celibacy and marriage. In marriage he sees from that time forward nothing by the gratification of the natural impulse; to it every man must have recourse unless he enjoys the extraordinary grace of God; the ancient Church, with her hatred of marriage, her professed religious and celibate clergy, assumes in his imagination the most execrable shape. He fancies that, thanks to his new notions,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 330 f.; "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 353 *seq.* "Iudicium de votis monasticis." Cp. vol. iii., p. 248.

[2] "Apol. Conf. Augustanæ," c. 23, n. 38; Bekenntnisschriften, [10], p. 242: "*Ita virginitas donum est præstantius coniugio.*"

he has risen far above the Christianity of the past, albeit the Church had ever striven to guard the sanctity of marriage as the very apple of her eye, by enacting many laws and establishing marriage-courts of her own under special judges. He becomes ever more reckless in casting marriage matters on the shoulders of the State. In the Preface to his "Trawbüchlin," in 1529, he says, for instance, "Since wedlock and marriage are a worldly business, we clergy and ministers of the Church have nothing to order or decree about it, but must leave each town and country to follow its own usage and custom."[1]

From that time forward, particularly when the Diet of Augsburg had embittered the controversy, Luther pours out all the vials of his terrible eloquence on the bondage in which marriage had been held formerly, and on the contempt displayed by Rome for it. He peremptorily demands its complete secularisation.

And yet he ostentatiously extols marriage as "holy and Divine," and even says that wedlock is most pleasing to God, a mystery and Sacrament in the highest sense of the word. Of one of these passages Emil Friedberg, the Protestant canonist, remarks in his "Recht der Eheschliessung": "Luther's views as here expressed completely contradict other passages, and this same discrepancy is apparent throughout the later literature, and, even now, prevents [Protestants] from appreciating truly the nature of marriage."[2]

Every impartial observer could have seen that the preference given to virginity by the Catholic Church, her defence of the manner of life of those whom God had called

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 74; Erl. ed., 23, p. 208.

[2] Leipzig, 1865, p. 159. Friedberg adduces passages from H.L. v. Strampff, "Uber die Ehe; aus Luthers Schriften zusammengetragen," Berlin, 1857. Falk, "Die Ehe am Ausgang des MA.," p. 73. Th. Kolde says, in his "M. Luther," 2, p. 488, that the reformers, and Luther in particular, "lacked a true insight into the real, moral nature of marriage." "At that time at any rate [1522 f.] it was always the sensual side of marriage to which nature impels, which influenced him. That marriage is essentially the closest communion between two individuals, and thus, by its very nature, excludes more than two, never became clear to him or to the other reformers." Kolde, however, seeks to trace this want of perception to the "mediæval views concerning marriage." Cp. Denifle, 1^1, p. 285. Otto Scheel, the translator of Luther's work on Monastic Vows ("Werke Luthers, Auswahl, usw., Ergänzungsbd.," 1, p. 199 ff.), speaks of Luther's view of marriage as "below that of the Gospel" (p. 198).

to the cloister, and her guardianship of the celibacy of the priesthood, handed down from the earliest ages, did not in the least imply any undervaluing of marriage on her part—unless indeed, as Joseph Mausbach remarks, he was prepared to admit that, "because one thing is better, its opposite must needs be bad."

"Who thinks," continues the same writer, that "preference for gold involves contempt for silver, or preference for the rose a depreciation of all other flowers? But these very comparisons are to be met with even amongst the ancient Fathers. . . . Why should the Church's praise of virginity be always misconstrued as a reproach against matrimony? All this is mere thoughtlessness, when it is not blind prejudice, for the Church did everything to prevent any misunderstanding of her praise of virginity, and certainly taught and defended the sanctity of marriage with all her power."[1]

Luther's judgment was not due so much to mere thoughtlessness as to his burning hatred of the Papacy; this we see from the vulgar abuse which, whenever he comes to speak of marriage and celibacy, he showers on the Pope, the supreme champion of the Evangelical Counsels and of the priestly ideal of life; on the other hand, it was also to some extent due to his deeply rooted and instinctive aversion for everything whereby zealous Christians do violence to nature out of love for God, from the motive of penance and from a desire to obtain merit.

The Natural Impulse and the Honour of Marriage.

Ecclesiastical writers before Luther's day speak frequently and plainly enough of the impulse of nature, but, as a rule, only in order to recommend its control, to point out the means of combating excesses, and to insist on the Sacrament which sanctifies conjugal intercourse and brings down the blessings we require if the earthly and eternal purpose of marriage is to be fulfilled.

Luther, however, if we may trust one of his most zealous defenders, rendered a great service with regard to sexual intercourse in that "he shook off the pseudo-ascetic spirit of the past." He demonstrated, so we are told, particularly in what he

[1] "Die kath. Moral," 1902, p. 118.

wrote to Spalatin about the "*actus matrimonialis*"[1]—words which some have regarded as offensive—"that even that act, though represented by his opponents as obscene, to the faithful Christian who 'receives it with thanksgiving' (1 Tim. iv. 4), contained nothing to raise a blush or to forbid its mention." According to the "Roman view" it is perfectly true that "the '*actus matrimonialis*' is sinless only when performed with the object of begetting children, or in order to fulfil the conjugal due."[2] This, he exclaims, "was forsooth to be the sole motive of conjugal intercourse! And, coupled with this motive, the act even becomes meritorious! Is there any need of confuting so repulsive a notion? . . . Luther's view is very different. The natural sexual passion was, according to him, the will and the work of God." "The effect of the Roman exaltation of celibacy was to make people believe, that the motive [of conjugal intercourse] implanted by God, viz. sexual attraction, must not be yielded to." This attraction Luther declared to be the one motive on account of which we should "thankfully avail ourselves" of matrimony. "This Luther conveys most clearly in his letter to Spalatin, his intimate friend, shortly after both had wedded. . . . We know no higher conception of conjugal intercourse."

This description does not do justice to the mediæval Catholic teaching on matrimony, its duties and privileges. This teaching never demanded the suppression of sensual attraction or love. It fully recognised that this had been implanted in human nature by God's wise and beneficent hand as a stimulus to preserve and multiply the human race, according to His command: "Be fruitful and multiply." But the Church urged all to see that this impulse was kept pure and worthy by attention to its higher purpose, viz. to the object appointed from above. Instead of becoming its slave the Christian was to ennoble it by allowing the motives of faith to play their part in conjugal intercourse. The Church's teaching would indeed have been "repulsive" had it demanded the general repression of the sexual instinct and not merely the taming of that unruliness which is the result of original sin, and is really unworthy of man. Had she imposed the obligation to wage an impossible struggle against it as a thing essentially sinful, then her teaching might indeed have been described as "repulsive."

Still it is sufficiently tragic, that, in spite of the gratification of the sensual impulse of nature playing the principal part in his new and supposedly more exalted view of conjugal intercourse, Luther should, on account of the concupiscence involved, characterise the "*actus matrimonialis*" as a mortal sin. In "*De votis mon-*

[1] On Dec. 6, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 279. See vol. iii., p. 269. The passage was omitted by Aurifaber and De Wette probably because not judged quite proper.

[2] Aug., "De bono coniug.," c. 6, n. 6; c. 7, n. 6. According to Denifle, 1^1, p. 277, n. 2, the Schoolmen knew the passages through the Lombard "Sent.," 4, dist. 31, c. 5. He also quotes S. Thom., "Summa theol.," Supplem., q. 41, a. 4; q. 49, a. 5; q. 64, a. 4: "*ut sibi invicem debitum reddant.*"

asticis," his work written at the Wartburg, he says: "According to Ps. l. 7, it is a sin differing in nothing from adultery and fornication so far as the sensual passion and hateful lust are concerned; God, however, does not impute it to the married, though simply because of His compassion, since it is impossible for us to avoid it, although our duty would really be to do without it."[1] We are already familiar with his curious and impossible theory of imputation, according to which God is able to close His eyes to a sin, which nevertheless is really there.

That there is actual sin in the act Luther also insists elsewhere, at the same time pleading, however, that the sin is not imputed by God, who, as it were, deliberately winks at it: "In spite of all the good I say of married life, I will not grant so much to nature as to admit that there is no sin in it; what I say is that we have here flesh and blood, depraved in Adam, conceived and born in sin (Ps. l. 7), and that no conjugal due is ever rendered without sin."[2]—The blessing which God bestowed on marriage, he says elsewhere, fallen human nature was "not able to accomplish without sin"; "without sin no married persons could do their duty."[3]

Hence the following inference would seem justified: Matrimony is really a state of sin. Such was the opinion, not of the Church before Luther's day, but of her assailant, whose opponents soon pointed out to him how unfounded was his supposition.[4] The ancient Church, by the voice of her theologians, declared the "*actus matrimonialis,*" when performed in the right way and to a right end, to be no sin; they admitted the inevitable satisfaction of concupiscence, but allowed it so long as its gratification was not all that was sought. According to Luther—whom the author above referred to has quite rightly understood—it is different: Sin is undoubtedly committed, but we may, nay, are bound, to commit it.

With the above, all Luther's statements on the inevitable strength of the impulse of nature agree. Though the union of husband and wife is a rule of the natural law applying to the majority rather than to the individual, Luther practically makes it binding upon all. In this connection he seems to be unable to view the moral relation of the sexes in any other light than as existing for the gratification of mutual lust, since without marriage they must inevitably

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 654; "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 355. On the text, see Denifle, 1^2, p. 263, n. 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, 20, 2, p. 304; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 541. "On Married Life," 1522.

[3] *Ibid.*, 12, p. 114. Cp. "Opp. lat. exeg.," 4, p. 10.

[4] N. Paulus, "Hist. Jahrb.," 27, 1906, p. 495, art. "Zu Luthers Schrift über die Mönchsgelübde": "Luther's false view of the sinfulness of the '*actus matrimonialis*' was strongly repudiated by Catholics, particularly by Clichtoveus and Cochlæus."

fall into every sort of carnal sin. "It is a necessary and natural thing, that every man should have a wife," he says in the lengthy passage already quoted, where he concludes, "it is more necessary than eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, or passing the natural motions of the body."[1] Elsewhere, in a characteristic comparison, he says: "Were a man compelled to close his bowels and bladder—surely an utter impossibility—what would become of him?"[2] According to him, "man must be fruitful, and multiply, and breed," "like all other animals, since God has created him thereto, so that, of necessity, a man must seek a wife, and a woman a husband, unless God works a miracle."[3]

Many were they who, during the controversies which accompanied the schism, listened to such teaching and believed it and were ready to forgo the miracle in order to follow the impulse of nature; were ready to indulge their weakness did their state of life prohibit marriage, or to dissolve the marriage already contracted when it did not turn out to their taste, or when they fancied they could advance one of the numerous reasons proclaimed by Luther for its annulment. The evil effects of such morality in the 16th century (see below, p. 164 ff. and xxiv. 1 and 2), witnessed to on all sides by Lutherans as well as Catholics, prove conclusively that the originator of the new matrimonial theories was the last man qualified to reproach the ancient Church with a want of appreciation for marriage or for woman.

Nor must we look merely at the results. The man's very character, his mode of thought and his speech, suffice to banish him from the society of the olden, earnest moralists. Albeit unwillingly, we must add here some further statements to those already adduced.[4]

"If a man feels his manhood," Luther says, "let him take a wife and not tempt God. '*Puella propterea habet pudenda,*' to provide him a remedy that he may escape pollution and adultery."[5]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 276; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 511. "Sermon on the Married Life," 1522.
[2] *Ibid.*, 12, p. 66; Erl. ed., 53, p. 188.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 113. [4] Cp. vol. iii., p. 264 ff.
[5] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 101. Then follows a highly questionable statement concerning a rule of the Wittenberg Augustinian monastery, in which Luther fails to distinguish between "*pollu-*

"The sting of the flesh may easily be helped, so long as girls and women are to be found."[1]

Our readers will not have forgotten the reason he gives why women have so little intellect;[2] or the reproof addressed to him by Staupitz.[3]

Luther urges early marriage in the words of an old proverb: "To rise early and to marry young will cause regret to no one." "It will fare with you," he says to the same addressee, "as with the nuns to whom they gave carved Jesuses. They cast about for others, who at least were living and pleased them better, and sought how best to escape from their convent."[4]—"What greater service can one do a girl than to get her a baby? This rids her of many fancies."[5] Here, and elsewhere too, he is anxious that people should marry, even though there should not be enough to live upon; God would not allow the couple to starve if they did their duty.[6]—"A young fellow should be simply given a wife, otherwise he has no peace. Then the troubles of matrimony will soon tame him."[7]

On another occasion (1540) Luther expresses himself with greater caution about too early matches: "It is not good for young people to marry too soon. They are ruined in their prime, exhaust their strength and neglect their studies." "But the young men are consumed with passion," one of those present objected, "and the theologians work upon their conscience and tell them that 'To marry young will cause regret to no one.'" Luther's reply was: "The young men are unwilling to resist any temptations. . . . They should console themselves with the hope of future marriage. We used to be forbidden to marry in almost all the Faculties, hence the youths indulged in all kinds of excesses, knowing that, later on, they would no longer be able to do so. Thus they sunk into every kind of disorder. But now everybody is allowed to marry, even the theologian and the bishop. Hence, in their own interests, they ought to learn to wait."[8]

At other times he was inclined to promote hasty marriages from motives of policy, and, without a thought of the dignity of the conjugal union and the respect due to woman, to use it as a means to increase the number of his followers.

tiones voluntariæ" and "*involuntariæ*," but which draws from him the exclamation: "All the monasteries and foundations ought to be destroyed, if only on account of these shocking '*pollutiones*'!"

[1] Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," p. 73, where some improper remarks may be found on the temptation of St. Paul (according to the notes, on account of St. Thecla) and that of St. Benedict, who, we are told, rolled himself in the thorns to overcome it.

[2] See vol. iii., p. 267, n. 10.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 122: "*Scribis, mea iactari ab iis qui lupanaria colunt.*"

[4] "Briefe," ed. by De Wette, 6, p. 419, undated.

[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 373. To a bridegroom in 1536.

[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 364 f.; Erl. ed., 41, p. 135. Brandenburg, "Luther über die Obrigkeit," p. 7.

[7] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 437.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

This happened in the case of many of his converts from the ranks of the clergy and religious.[1]

In the case of the Bishop of Samland, George von Polenz, and his adviser, Johann Briesmann, the ex-Franciscan, who both were desirous of marrying, Luther judged that delay would be disastrous. He urged them to make haste and be publicly wedded, both having already contracted a so-called marriage in conscience; in their case there was "danger in delay," and, as the saying goes, "If you wait a night, you wait a year"; even Paul had said we must not receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. vi. 1), and the bride in the Canticle complained that the bridegroom "was gone," because she had been tardy in opening the door (v. 6). A German proverb said, "Wenn das Ferkel beut soll man den Sack herhalten." Esau's lost birthright, and the solemn words of Christ concerning separation from Him (John xii. 35 f.) were also made to serve his purpose. "Take it when, where and how you can, or you won't get another chance." A man could not be sure of his own mind on account of the snares of the devil; a marriage not yet publicly ratified remained somewhat uncertain.[2]

Before these exhortations reached them both the parties in question had, however, already taken the public step.

It was in those very days that Luther celebrated his own wedding and sent his pressing invitation to marry to the Cardinal and Elector of Mayence, telling him that, short of a miracle, or without some peculiar grace, it was a "terrible thing" for a man "to be found without a wife at the hour of death."[3] It was then, too, that he sent to Albert of Prussia, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, who was contemplating marriage, his congratulations on the secularisation of the lands of the Order and the founding of the Duchy, which he had even previously strongly urged him to do. In this letter he tells the Grand Master that it was "God Almighty," "Who had graciously and mercifully helped him to such a position [that of a secular Prince]."[4] The Grand Master's marriage and consequent breach of his vow of chastity followed in 1526. He invited Luther to the wedding and wrote to him, that God had given him "the grace to enter the Order [of marriage] instituted by Himself" after he had

[1] See vol. ii., pp. 115–28.

[2] To Spalatin, June 10, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 189 f. Enders (p. 191) would refer the above passages to Luther's own marriage, but G. Bossert ("Theol. Literaturztng.," 1907, p. 691) makes out a better case for their reference to Polenz and Briesmann. Two persons at least are obviously referred to: "*Quod illi vero prætexunt, certos sese fore de animo suo, stultum est; nullius cor est in manu sua, diabolus potentissimus est,*" etc. Luther evidently felt, that, until the persons in question had been bound to the new Evangel by their public marriages, their support could not be entirely reckoned on.

[3] On June 2, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 308 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 186). See vol. ii., p. 142.

[4] On May 26, 1525, "Werke," *ibid.*, p. 304 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 179).

"laid aside the cross [the sign of the Order] and entered the secular estate."

It cannot be denied, that in all these marriages which Luther promoted, or at least favoured, what he had his eye on was the advantage of the new Church system, Of any raising of the moral position of women, of any deepening of the significance of marriage, there is here no trace; these marriages served quite another purpose. The circumstances attending them were, moreover, frequently far from dignified. "The Bishop of Samland," so Philip von Creutz, a Knight of the Teutonic Order, relates, "gave up his bishopric to the Duke [Albert] in the presence of the whole assembly. . . . He caused his mitre to be broken up and, out of its precious stones and jewels, he had ornaments made for his wife."[1]

Practical Consequences of the New View of Woman: Matrimonial Impediments, Divorce.

The readiness shown by Luther to annul valid marriages, and the wayward manner in which he disposed of the impediments fixed by the Church, were not calculated to enhance respect either for marriage or for woman.

As regards the impediments to marriage we shall here merely refer to the practical and not uncommon case where a person wished to marry a niece. Whereas Canon Law, at one with Roman Law, regarded this relationship as constituting an impediment, which might, however, be dispensed from by the Pope, Luther at first saw fit to declare it no impediment at all; he even issued memoranda to this effect, one of which was printed in 1526 and circulated widely.[2] "If the Pope was able to dispense," he said later on concerning this, "why can't I too?"[3] In favour of the lawfulness of such marriages he appealed to the example of Abraham, and in reply to objections declared: "If they blame the work and example of the holy Patriarch Abraham, then let them be scandalised."[4] At a later date, nevertheless,

[1] Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Eng. Trans., 5, p. 114).

[2] Advice to this effect is found in letters of Dec. 22, 1525, and Jan. 5, 1526, both addressed to Marquard Schuldorp of Magdeburg, who married his niece, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 283 (and p. 303). The second letter, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 364, was printed at Magdeburg in 1526. In the first letter he says, that though the Pope would in all likelihood refuse to grant a dispensation in this case, yet it sufficed that God was not averse to the marriage. "They shall not be allowed to curtail our freedom!"

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 337, in 1544.

[4] In the second letter to Schuldorp. Cp. N. Paulus, "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 135, 1905, p. 85.

he changed his mind and held such marriages to be unlawful. His previous statements he explained by saying that once he had indeed given a different decision, not in order to lead others into excesses but in order "to assist consciences at the hour of death against the Pope"; he had merely given advice in Confession to troubled consciences, and had not laid down any law; to make laws was not within his province, either in the State or in the Church. His former memoranda were not to be alleged now; a certain man of the name of Borner, who, on the strength of them, had married his niece, had acted very ill and done injustice to his (Luther's) decision. The Pope alone, so Luther says, was to blame for his previous advice—because many, owing to his laws, were reduced to despair and had come to Luther for help. "It is true that in Confession and in order to pacify consciences I have advised differently, but I made a mistake in allowing such counsels to be made public. Now, however, it is done. This is a matter for Confession only."[1]

When speaking in this way, in 1544, he probably had in mind his so-called advice in Confession to Philip of Hesse. He was still acting on the principle, that advice given in Confession might afterwards be publicly repudiated as quite wrong; he failed somehow to see that the case of marriage of uncle and niece was of its very nature something public.

The multitude of divorces caused him great anxiety. Even the preachers of the new faith were setting a bad example by putting away their spouses and contracting fresh marriages. Melander, for instance, who blessed Philip's second marriage, after deserting "two wives in succession without even seeking legal aid, married a third."[2] At Gotha, as Luther himself relates, a woman deserted her

[1] Mathesius, *ibid.* For further explanation of this statement, cp. Luther's letter of Dec. 10, 1543, to D. Hesse, "Briefe," 5, p. 606 ff. He there says of his decision on the lawfulness of this marriage: "*Est nuda tabula, in qua nihil docetur aut iubetur, sed modeste ostenditur, quid in veteri lege de his traditum sit. . . . In consolationem confessorem seu conscientiarum mea quoque scheda fuit emissa contra papam.*" He insists that he had always spoken in support of the secular laws on marriage and against the reintroduction of the Mosaic ordinances. "*Ministrorum verbi non est leges condere, pertinet hoc ad magistratum civilem . . . ideo et coniugium debet legibus ordinari. Tamen si quis casus cogeret dispensare, non vererer occulte in conscientiis aliter consulere, vel si esset publicus casus, consulere, ut a magistratu peteret dispensationem.*"

[2] Rockwell, "Die Doppelehe Philipps," p. 86.

husband and her three children, and sent him a message to tell him he might take another wife. When, however, he had done so the woman again asserted her claims. "Our lawyers," Luther complains, "at once took her part, but the Elector decided she should quit the country. My own decision would have been to have her done to death by drowning."[1]

In a still existing letter of 1525, Luther permitted Michael Kramer, preacher at Domitsch, near Torgau, to contract a third marriage, two previous ones having turned out unfortunate. Kramer, as a Catholic priest, had first married a servant maid and, for this, had been sent to jail by Duke George his sovereign. When the maid proved unfaithful and married another, Luther, to whom Kramer had attached himself, declared her to be really "deceased" and told the preacher he might use his "Christian freedom." Kramer thereupon married a girl from Domitsch, where he had been in the meantime appointed Lutheran pastor. This new wife likewise ran away from him three weeks later. He now addressed himself to the local board of magistrates, who, conjointly with him, wrote to Luther, pointing out how the poor man "could not do without a wife." Luther thereupon sent a memorandum, addressed to the "magistrates and the preacher of Domitsch," in which he allowed a divorce from the second wife and gave permission for a third marriage, which, apparently, was more of a success. During the Visitations in 1528 this preacher, who had since been transferred to Lucka, got into trouble on account of his three marriages, but saved his skin by appealing to Luther's letter.[2]

The reader already knows that, according to Luther, a woman who has no children by her husband, may, with the latter's consent, quietly dissolve the marriage and cohabit with another, for instance, with her brother-in-law; this, however, was to be secret, because the children were to be regarded as her first husband's. Should he refuse his consent, says Luther, "rather than suffer her to burn or have recourse to adultery, I would advise her to marry another and flee to some place where she is unknown. What

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 374, Jan., 1537.

[2] Luther's memorandum, Aug. 18, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 326 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 228). Cp. Enders' Notes to this letter.

other advice can be given to one who is in constant danger from carnal lusts ? "[1] Duke George of Saxony, referring to a similar passage in Luther's work " On Conjugal Life " (1522),[2] said in a letter to Luther which was immediately printed : " When was it ever heard of that wives should be taken from their husbands and given to other men, as we now find it stated in your Evangel ? Has adultery ever been more common than since you wrote : If a woman has no children by her husband, then let her go to another and bear children whom her husband must provide for as though he were the father ? This is the fruit of the precious Evangel which you dragged forth out of the gutter. You were quite right when you said you found it in the gutter ; what we want to know is, why you didn't leave it there."[3]

What Luther had said concerning the refusal to render the conjugal due : " If the wife refuse, then let the maid come," attracted more attention than he probably anticipated, both among his own adherents and among his foes. It is true, as already pointed out, that the context does not justify illicit relations outside marriage (see vol. iii., p. 252 f.), but the words as they stand, to say nothing of the unlikelihood of any real marriage with the maid, and, finally, the significance which may have clung to a coarse saying of the populace possibly alluded to by Luther, all favoured those who chose to make the tempting phrase a pretext for such extra-matrimonial relations.

When the sermon on marriage in which the passage occurs was published, Duke George's representative at the Diet of Nuremberg in 1522 sent his master at Dresden a copy of the booklet, " which the devilish monk," so he writes, " has unblushingly published, though it has cost him the loss of many followers about here ; it would not go well with us poor husbands, should our naughty wives read it. I shall certainly not give my wife one."[4] Duke George replied with a grim jest which doubtless went the rounds at Nuremberg among those whom the booklet had offended : " As to what you write," George says, " viz. that you won't let your wife read the little book on marriage, methinks you are acting unwisely ; in our opinion it contains something which might serve even a jealous husband like you very well ; for it says, that if your wife refuses to do your will you have only to turn to the maid. Hence keep a look out for

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 558 ; " Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 98 *seq.* " *De captivitate babylonica.*"
[2] *Ibid.*, 10. 2, p. 278 ; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 513 f.
[3] Dec. 28, 1525, " Luthers Briefwechsel," 5, p. 289.
[4] Dec. 19, 1522, " Akten und Briefe des Herzogs Georg von Sachsen," ed. F. Gess, 1, 1905, p. 402.

pretty maids. These and similar utterances you may very well hold over your wife."[1]

In 1542 Wicel, in his Postils, speaking of the preachers, says: "The words of St. Paul, 'Art thou loosed from a wife, seek not a wife,' 1 Cor. vii. 27, have a very unevangelical sound on the lips of these Evangelists. How then must it be? Quick, take a wife or a husband; whether you be young or old, make haste; should one die, don't delay to take another. Celebrate the wedding, if it turns out ill, then let the maid come! Divorce this one and take in marriage that one, whether the first be living or dead! For chambering and wantonness shall not be neglected," —"Since the coming of Christ," says the same writer elsewhere, "there have never been so many divorces as under Luther's rule."[2]

Of the unlooked-for effects produced among Luther's preachers by the above saying, Sebastian Flasch, an ex-Lutheran preacher and native of Mansfeld, complained in 1576: "Although the preachers are married, yet they are so ill-content with their better halves, that, appealing to Luther's advice, they frequently, in order to gratify their insatiable concupiscence, seduce their maids, and, what is even more shameful, do not blush to misconduct themselves with other men's wives or to exchange wives among themselves." He appeals to his long experience of Lutheranism and relates that such a "*commutatio uxorum*" had been proposed to him by a preacher of high standing.[3]—Much earlier than this, in 1532, Johann Mensing, the Dominican, wrote sadly, that the state of matrimony was dreadfully disgraced by the new preachers; "for they give a man two wives, a woman two husbands, allow the man to use the maid should the wife not prove compliant, and the wife to take another husband should her own prove impotent." "When they feel disposed or moved to what is sin and shameful, they say the Holy Spirit urges them. Is not that a fine tale that all the world is telling about Melchior Myritsch of Magdeburg, of Jacob Probst of Bremen and of others in the Saxon land. What certain mothers have discovered concerning their daughters and maids, who listened to such preaching, it is useless to relate."[4]—The name of the ex-Augustinian, Melchior Myritsch, or Meirisch, recalls the coarseness of the advice given by Luther, on Feb. 10, 1525, to the latter's new spouse. (See vol. ii., p. 144.)

[1] Jan. 1, 1523, *ibid.*, p. 415. Cp. N. Paulus, "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 137, 1906, p. 56 f.

[2] "Postille," Mainz, 1542, 4b. Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1, p. 52.

[3] "*Professio catholica*," Coloniæ, 1580 (reprint), p. 219 *seq.* Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," 8^{14}, p. 456. Several replies were called forth by this over-zealous and extremely anti-Lutheran polemic.

[4] "Vormeldung der Unwahrheit Luterscher Clage," Frankfurt/Oder, 1532. N. Paulus, "Die deutschen Dominikaner," etc., p. 33.

Respect for the Female Sex in Luther's Conversations.

Had Luther, as the legend he set on foot would make us believe, really raised the dignity of woman and the married state to a higher level, we might naturally expect, that, when he has to speak of matters sexual or otherwise repugnant to modesty, he would at least be reticent and dignified in his language. We should expect to find him surrounded at Wittenberg by a certain nobility of thought, a higher, purer atmosphere, a nobler general tone, in some degree of harmony with his extraordinary claims. Instead we are confronted with something very different. Luther's whole mode of speech, his conversations and ethical trend, are characterised by traits which even the most indulgent of later writers found it difficult to excuse, and which, particularly his want of delicacy towards women, must necessarily prove offensive to all.[1]

Luther was possibly not aware that the word "nun" comes from the Low Latin "*nonna*," i.e. woman, and was originally the name given to those who dwelt in the numerous convents of Upper Egypt; he knew, however, well enough that the word "monk" was but a variant of "*monachus*." He jestingly gives to both the former and the latter an odious derivation. "The word nun," he says, "comes from the German, and cloistered women are thus called, because that is the term for unsexed sows; in the same way the word monk is derived from the horses [viz. the gelded horses]. But the operation was not altogether successful, for they are obliged to wear breeches just like other people."[2] It may be that Catherine, the ex-nun, was present when this was said; at any rate she is frequently mentioned in the Table-Talk as assisting.[3]

He could not let slip the opportunity of having a dig at the ladies who were sometimes present at his post-prandial entertainments. In 1542 conversation turned on Solomon's many wives and concubines. Luther pointed out,[4] that the figures given in the Bible must be taken as referring to all the women dwelling in the palace, even to such as had no personal intercourse with Solomon. "One might as well say," he continues, "Dr. Martin

[1] Cp. above, p. 152 f.
[2] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 340. Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 252.
[3] Cp., for instance, present work, vol. iii., p. 268, and vol. ii., p. 378.
[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 281.

has three wives ; one is Katey, another Magdalene, the third the pastoress ; also a concubine, viz. the virgin Els.[1] This made him laugh [writes the narrator, Caspar Heydenreich] ; and besides these he has many girls. In the same way Solomon had three hundred queens ; if he took only one every night, the year would be over, and he would not have had a day's rest. That cannot be, for he had also to govern."[2]

He advised that those who were troubled with doubts concerning their salvation should speak of improper subjects ("*loquaris de venereis*"), that was an infallible remedy.[3] In one such case he invited a pupil to jest freely with his own wife, Catherine. "Talk about other things," Luther urges him, "which entirely distract your thoughts."[4]

As we know, Luther himself made liberal use of such talk to cheer up himself and others. Thus, in the presence of his guests, in 1537, he joked about Ferdinand, the German King, his extreme thinness and his very stout wife who was suspected of misconduct : "Though he is of such an insignificant bodily frame," he says, "others will be found to assist him in the nuptial bed. But it is a nuisance to have the world filled with alien heirs."[5]—This leads him to speak of adulteresses in other districts.[6]

A coarser tale is the one he related about the same time. A minister came to him complaining of giddiness and asking for a remedy. His answer was : "Lass das Loch daheime," which, so the narrators explain, meant, "that he should not go to such excess in chambering."[7]—A similar piece of advice is given by Luther in the doggerel verses which occur in his Table-Talk : "Keep your neck warm and cosy,—Do not overload your belly.—Don't be too sweet on Gertie ;—Then your locks will whiten slowly."[8]—On one occasion he showed his friends a turquoise ("*turchesia*"), which had been given him, and said, following the superstition of the day, that when immersed in water it would make movements "*sicut isti qui eveniunt juveni cum a virgine in chorea circumfertur*," but, that, in doing so, it broke.[9] On account of the many children he had caused to be begotten from priests and religious, he, as we already know, compared himself to Abraham, the father of a great race : He, like Abraham, was

[1] This was Elisabeth Kaufmann, a niece of Luther's, yet unmarried, who lived with her widowed sister Magdalene at the Black Monastery. The "pastoress" was the wife of the apostate priest Bugenhagen, Pastor of Wittenberg, who, during Bugenhagen's absence in Brunswick, seems to have enjoyed the hospitality of the same great house. The "many girls" are Luther's servants and those of the other inhabitants.

[2] Aurifaber suppressed the end of this conversation. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 201.

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 221.

[4] Cp. vol. iii., p. 175 f. Cp. p. 179.

[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 390.

[6] Cp. vol. v., xxxi., 5.

[7] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 396.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 405 f.

the grandfather of all the descendants of the monks, priests and nuns and the father of a mighty people.[1]

We may not pass over here Luther's frequent use of filthy expressions, which, though they agree well with his natural coarseness, harmonise but ill with the high ideals we should expect in one whose vocation it was to rescue marriage and feminine dignity from the slough of the Papacy. He is fond of using such words in his abuse of the Popish teaching on marriage: At one time, he writes, the Papists make out marriage to be a Sacrament, "at another to be impure, i.e. a sort of merdiferpus Sacrament."[2] The Pope, who waywardly teaches this and other doctrines, "has overthrown the Word of God"; "if the Pope's reputation had not been destroyed by the Word of God, the devil himself would have ejected him" ('*a posteriori*').[3] Elsewhere he voices his conviction as to the most fitting epithet to apply to the Pope's "human ordinances." One thing in man, he explains, viz. "the '*anus*,' cannot be bound; it is determined to be master and to have the upper hand. Hence this is the only thing in man's body or soul upon which the Pope has not laid his commands."[4]

"The greatest blessing of marriage," he tells his friends, "lies in the children; this D.G. [Duke George] was not fated to see in his sons, '*quos spectatissima principissa cacatos in lucem ederat.*'"[5]

The Pope and his people, he says in a sermon, had "condemned and rejected matrimony as a dirty, stinking state." "Had the creation of human beings been in the Pope's power he would never have created woman, or allowed any such to exist in the world."[6] "The Pope, the devil and his Church," he says in 1539, "are hostile to the married state. . . . Matrimony [in their opinion] is mere fornication."[7]

The Pope, he says, had forbidden the married state; he and his followers, "the monks and Papists," "burn with evil lust and love of fornication, though they refuse to take upon themselves the trouble and labour of matrimony."[8] "With the help of the Papacy Satan has horribly soiled matrimony, God's own ordinance"; the fact was, the clergy had been too much afraid of woman; "and so it goes on: If

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 426. See vol. iii., p. 273. Akin to this is his self-congratulation (above, p. 46), that he works for the increase of mankind, whereas the Papists put men to death.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 430.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 405.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 388.

[5] *Ibid.*, 61, p. 193. The last words are omitted in the two old editions of the Table-Talk by Selnecker and Stangwald.

[6] *Ibid.*, 20^2, p. 365. At the marriage of the apostate Dean of Merseburg.

[7] *Ibid.*, 25^2, p. 373; cp. p. 369 and above, vol. iii., p. 251, n. 3.

[8] *Ibid.*, 61, p. 204 (Table-Talk).

a man fears fornication he falls into secret sin, as seems to have been the case with St. Jerome."[1]

He saw sexual excesses increasing to an alarming extent among the youth of his own party. At table a friend of the "young fellows" sought to excuse their "wild, immoral life and fornication" on the ground of their youth; Luther sighed, at the state of things revealed, and said: "Alas, that is how they learn contempt for the female sex." Contempt will simply lead to abuse; the true remedy for immorality was prayerfully to hold conjugal love in honour.[2]

Luther, however, preferred to dwell upon the deep-seated vice of an anti-matrimonial Papacy rather than on the results of his teaching upon the young.

"Every false religion," he once exclaimed in 1542 in his Table-Talk,[3] "has been defiled by sensuality! Just look at the ,!"—[He must here have used, says Kroker, "a term for *phallus*, or something similar," which Caspar Heydenreich the reporter has suppressed.][4] "What else were the pilgrimages," Luther goes on, "but opportunities for coming together? What does the Pope do but wallow unceasingly in his lusts? . . . The heathen held marriage in far higher honour than do the Pope and the Turk. The Pope hates marriage, and the Turk despises it. But it is the devil's nature to hate God's Word. What God loves, e.g. the Church, marriage, civic order, that he hates. He desires fornication and impurity; for if he has these, he knows well that people will no longer trouble themselves about God."

The New Matrimonial Conditions and the Slandered Opponents.

It is a fact witnessed to by contemporaries, particularly by Catholics, that Luther's unrestraint when writing on sexual subjects, his open allusions to organs and functions, not usually referred to, and, especially, the stress he laid on the irresistibility of the natural impulse, were not without notable effect on the minds of the people, already excited as they were.

[1] "Werke," *ibid.*, p. 205 (Table-Talk).
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 211. [3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 262.
[4] For similar instances of the use of such signs see vol. iii., p. 231. The Nuremberg MS. of the Mathesius collection substitutes here, according to Kroker, a meaningless phrase. The MS. in the Ducal Library at Gotha, entitled "Farrago" (1551), omits it altogether.

In 1522, after having explained his new views on divorce, he puts himself the question, whether this " would not make it easy for wicked men and women to desert each other, and betake themselves to foreign parts " ? His reply is : " How can I help it ? It is the fault of the authorities. Why do they not strangle adulterers ? "[1]

Certain preachers of Lutheranism made matters worse by the fanaticism with which they preached the freedom of the Evangel. So compromising was their support, that other of Luther's followers found fault with it, for instance, the preacher Urbanus Rhegius[2] It was, however, impossible for these more cautious preachers to prevent Luther's principles being carried to their consequences, in spite of all the care they took to emphasise his reserves and his stricter admonitions.

The Protestant Rector, J. Rivius, complained in 1547 : " If you are an adulterer or lewdster, preachers say . . . only believe and you will be saved. There is no need for you to fear the law, for Christ has fulfilled it and made satisfaction for all men." " Such words seduce people into a godless life."[3]

E. Sarcerius, the Superintendent of the county of Mansfeld, also bewailed, in a writing of 1555, the growing desecration of the married state : Men took more than one wife ; this they did by " fleeing to foreign parts and seeking other wives. Some women do the same. Thus there is no end to the desertions on the part of both husbands and wives." " In many places horrible adultery and fornication prevail, and these vices have become so common, that people no longer regard them as sinful." " Thus there is everywhere confusion and scandal both in match-making and in celebrating the marriages, so that holy matrimony is completely dishonoured and trodden under foot." " Of adultery, lewdness and incest there is no end."[4]—These complaints were called forth by the state of things in the very county where Luther was born and died.

The convert George Wicel, who resided for a considerable time at Mansfeld, had an opportunity of observing the effects of Luther's matrimonial teaching and of his preaching generally on a population almost entirely Protestant. He writes, in 1536 : " It is enough to break a Christian's heart to see so many false

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 289 ; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 525. On the " strangling," cp. vol. iii., p. 253, n. 3.

[2] " Wie man fürsichtiglich reden soll," ed. A. Uckeley, Leipzig, 1908, according to the 1536 German ed. (" Quellenschriften zur Gesch. des Protest.," Hft. 6).

[3] " *De stultitia mortalium*," Basil., 1557, 1, 1, p. 50 *seq.* Denifle, 1^2, p. 287.

[4] " Von werlicher Visitation," Eisleben, 1555, Bl. K. 3. Denifle, 1^2, p. 280.

prophets and heretics flourishing in Germany, whose comforting and frivolous teaching fills the land not merely with adulterers but with regular heathen."[1] In an earlier work he had said: "Oh, you people, what a fine manner of life according to the Gospel have you introduced by your preaching on Grace! Yes, they cry, you would make of Christ a Moses and a taskmaster; they, however, make of Him a procurer and an Epicurean by their sensual life and knavish example."[2]

Luther, it is true, had an excuse ready. He pleaded that the freedom of the Gospel was not yet rightly understood. "The masses," he wrote to Margrave George of Brandenburg, on Sep. 14, 1531, "have now fallen under the freedom of the flesh, and there we must leave them for a while until they have satisfied their lust. Things will be different when the Visitation is in working order [the first Visitation in the Margrave's lands had taken place as early as 1528]. It is quick work pulling down an old house, but building a new one takes longer. . . . Jerusalem, too, was built very slowly and with difficulty. . . . Under the Pope we could not endure the constraint, and the lack of the Word; now we cannot endure the freedom and the superabundant treasure of the Gospel."[3]

Amidst all these disorders Luther found great consolation in contemplating the anti-Christian character of the Popish Church and Daniel's supposed prophecy of Antichrist's enmity for woman.[4] His preachers only too eagerly followed in his footsteps.

George Wicel speaks of the preachers, who, while themselves leading loose lives, used Daniel's prophecy against the Catholic view of marriage.[5] "They mock at those who wish to remain single or who content themselves with one wife, and quote the words of Daniel: 'He shall not follow the lust of women nor regard any gods,' so that anyone belonging to this sect who is not addicted to the pursuit of women, is hardly safe from being taken for Antichrist. The words of St. Paul in Cor. vii., of Our Lord in Mat. xix., concerning the third sex of the eunuchs, and of St. John in Apoc. xiv., on those who have not defiled themselves with women, and, again, of St. Paul when speaking of the '*vidua digama*' in 1 Tim. v., don't count a farthing in this Jovinian school.[6] . . . It is an Epicurean school and an Epicurean life and nothing else." With biting satire, in part

[1] "Annotationen zu den Propheten," 2, Eisleben, 1536, fol. 88. Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1, p. 48.

[2] "Ein unüberwindlicher gründlicher Bericht was die Rechtfertigung in Paulo sei," Leipzig, 1533. Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 40.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 253 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 103).

[4] Dan. xi., 37. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 64, p. 155.

[5] "Annotationen zum A.T.," 2, fol. 198′. Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 106.

[6] The passages referred to are, according to the text of the Vulgate: 1 Cor. vii. 32: "*Qui sine uxore est, sollicitus est quæ Domini sunt,*" etc. *Ibid.*, 38: "*Qui non iungit (virginem suam) melius facit.*" *Ibid.*, 40: "*Beatior erit, si sic permanserit,*" etc. Mat. xix. 12: "*Sunt eunuchi, qui se ipsos castraverunt propter regnum Dei. Qui potest capere capiat.*" Apoc. xiv. 3 f., of those who sing "the new song before the throne" of

the result of the controversy thrust upon him, in part the outcome of his temper, he had declared shortly before, that Lutheranism was all "love of women," was "full of senseless lust for women"; he uses "gynecophiles" as an adjective to qualify it, and speaks of its "gynecomania"; by this means men were to become better Christians, and be more secure of salvation than all the Saints of God ever were in the ancient apostolic Church. "See there what Satan is seeking by means of this exalted respect for the love of women, and by his glib, feminist preachers in Saxony. Hence his and his followers' concern for women, to whom they cling so closely that they can hardly get into their pulpits without them, and, rather than live a celibate life, the Evangelist would prefer to be the husband, not of one wife, but of three or four."[1]

An intimate friend of Luther's, Johann Brenz, wrote, in 1532, in a book to which Luther supplied the Preface: "The youngsters are barely out of the cradle before they want wives, and girls, not yet marriageable, already dream of husbands."[2]—After the immoral atmosphere has brought about their fall, writes Fr. Staphylus, "they grow so impudent as to assert that a chaste and continent life is impossible and the gratification of the sexual appetite as essential as eating and drinking."[3]—The same author, who returned to the Catholic Church, also wrote, in 1562: "So long as matrimony was looked upon as a Sacrament, modesty and an honourable married life was loved and prized, but since the people have read in Luther's books that matrimony is a human invention . . . his advice has been put in practice in such a way, that marriage is observed more chastely and honourably in Turkey than amongst our German Evangelicals."[4]

The list of testimonies such as these might be considerably lengthened.[5]

the Lamb: "*Hi sunt, qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati, virgines enim sunt. Hi sequuntur agnum quocunque ierit. Hi empti sunt ex hominibus primitiæ Deo et Agno.*" 1 Tim. v. 12, of those widows dedicated to God who marry: "*Habentes damnationem, qui primam fidem irritam fecerunt.*"—Against Jovinian St. Jerome wrote, in 392: "Adv. Iovinianum" ("P.L.," 23, col. 211 *seq.*), where, in the first part, he defends virginity, which the former had attacked, and demonstrates its superiority and its merit.

[1] "Annotationen zum A.T.," 2, 1536, fol. 198′, on Daniel xi., 37. Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 105 f.

[2] "Homiliæ XXII," Vitebergæ, 1532. Denifle, "Luther und Luthertum," 1², p. 278.

[3] "*De corruptis moribus utriusque partis,*" Bl. F. III. In the title page the author's name is given as Czecanovius; this is identical with Staphylus, as N. Paulus has shown in the "Katholik," 1895, 1, p. 574 f.

[4] F. Staphylus, "Nachdruck zu Verfechtung des Buches vom rechten Verstandt des göttlichen Worts," Ingolstadt, 1562, fol. 202′.

[5] Cp. the quotations in Denifle (1², Preface, p. 15 ff.), commencing with one from Billicanus: "By the eternal God, what fornication and adultery are we not forced to witness"; also those on pp. 282 ff., 805 f.

It would, however, be unfair, in view of the large number of such statements, to shut our eyes to the remarkable increase, at that time, in the immorality already prevalent even in Catholic circles, though this was due in great measure to the malignant influence of the unhappy new idea of freedom, and to that contempt for ecclesiastical regulations as mere human inventions, which had penetrated even into regions still faithful to the Church.[1] Owing to the general confusion, ecclesiastical discipline was at a standstill, evil-doers went unpunished, nor could moral obligations be so regularly and zealously enforced. It is true that favourable testimonies are not lacking on both sides, but they chiefly refer to remote Catholic and Protestant localities. As is usual, such reports are less noticeable than the unfavourable ones, the good being ever less likely to attract attention than the evil. Staphylus complains bitterly of both parties, as the very title of his book proves.[2] Finally, all the unfavourable accounts of the state of married life under Lutheranism are not quite so bad as those given above, in which moreover, maybe, the sad personal experience of the writers made them see things with a jaundiced eye.

That, in the matter of clerical morals, there was a great difference between the end of the 15th and the middle of the 16th centuries can be proved by such ecclesiastical archives as still survive ; the condemnations pronounced in the 16th century are considerably more numerous than in earlier times.

On the grounds of such data Joseph Löhr has quite recently made a very successful attempt to estimate accurately the moral status of the clergy in the Lower Rhine provinces, particularly Westphalia.[3] He has based his examination more particularly on the records of the Archdeaconry of Xanten concerning the fines levied on the clergy for all sorts of offences. The accounts "cover a period of about one hundred years."[4] In the 16th century we find a quite disproportionate increase in the number of offenders. There are, however, traces, over a long term of years, of a distinct weakening of ecclesiastical discipline which made impossible any effective repression of the growing evil.

A glance at the conditions prevailing in the 15th century in the regions on which Löhr's researches bear is very instructive.

[1] Cp. Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," 8^{14}, pp. 378 f., 384 ff., 392.

[2] See above, p. 167, n. 3.

[3] J. Löhr, "Methodisch-kritische Beiträge zur Gesch. der Sittlichkeit des Klerus, besonders der Erzdiözese Köln, am Ausgange des MA." ("Reformationsgesch. Studien und Texte," Hft. 17, 1910).

[4] Page 44.

It enables us to see how extravagant and untrue were—at least with regard to these localities—the frequent, and in themselves quite incredible, statements made by Luther regarding the utter degradation of both clergy and religious owing to the law of celibacy. "Of a total of from 450 to 600 clergy in the Archdeaconry of the Lower Rhine (probably the number was considerably higher) we find, up to the end of the 15th century, on an average, only five persons a year being prosecuted by the Archdeacon for [various] offences."[1] "Assuming a like density of clergy in Westphalia, the number prosecuted by the ecclesiastical commissioner in 1495 and in 1499 would amount roughly to 2 per cent., but, in 1515, already to 6 per cent."[2]

The results furnished by such painstaking research are more reliable than the vague accounts and complaints of contemporaries.[3] Should the examination be continued in other dioceses it will undoubtedly do as much to clear up the question as the Visitation reports did for the condition of affairs in the 16th century under Lutheranism, though probably the final result will be different. The Lutheran Visitation reports mostly corroborate the unfavourable testimony of olden writers, whereas the fewness of the culprits shown in the Catholic lists of fines would seem to bear out, at least with regard to certain localities, those contemporaries who report favourably of the clergy at the close of the Middle Ages. One such favourable contemporary testimony comes from the Humanist, Jacob Wimpfeling, and concerns the clergy of the Rhine Lands. The statement of this writer, usually a very severe critic of the clergy, runs quite counter to Luther's general and greatly exaggerated charges.[4] "God knows, I am acquainted with many, yea,

[1] Page 59.

[2] Page 65. That all offenders without exception were punished is of course not likely.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 1–24.—For the 16th and 17th centuries we refer the reader to J. Schmidlin, "Die kirchl. Zustände in Deutschland vor dem Dreissigjährigen Kriege nach den bischöflichen Diözesanberichten an den Heiligen Stuhl," Freiburg, 1908–1911 ("Erläuterungen usw. zu Janssens Gesch.," 7, Hft. 1–10). In the "Hist. Jahrb.," 31, 1910, p. 163, we read of the reports contained in the first part of the work: "They commence by revealing the sad depths to which Catholic life had sunk, but go on to show an ever-increasing vigour on the part of the bishops, in many cases crowned with complete success."

[4] "*De vita et miraculis Iohannis Gerson*," s.l.e.a. (1506), B 4b; Janssen-Pastor, 1^{18}, p. 681. Wimpfeling is, however, answering the Augustinian, Johann Paltz, who had attacked the secular clergy; elsewhere he witnesses to the grave blots on the life of the secular clergy.

countless pastors amongst the secular clergy in the six dioceses of the Rhine, who are richly equipped with all the knowledge requisite for the cure of souls and whose lives are blameless. I know excellent prelates, canons and vicars both at the Cathedrals and the Collegiate Churches, not a few in number but many, men of unblemished reputation, full of piety and generous and humble-minded towards the poor."

Luther himself made statements which deprive his accusations of their point. Even what he says of the respect paid to the clerical state militates against him. Of the first Mass said by the newly ordained priest he relates, that "it was thought much of"; that the people on such occasions brought offerings and gifts; that the "bridegroom's" "Hours" were celebrated by torchlight, and that he, together with his mother, if still living, was led through the streets with music and dancing, "the people looking on and weeping for joy."[1] It is true that he is loud in his blame of the avarice displayed at such first Masses, but the respect shown by the people, and here described by him, would never have been exhibited towards the clergy had they rendered themselves so utterly contemptible by their immorality as he makes out.

In a sermon of 1521, speaking of the "majority of the clergy," he admits that most of them "work, pray and fast a great deal"; that they "sing, speak and preach of the law and lead men to many works"; that they fancy they will gain heaven by means of "pretty works," though all in vain, so he thinks, owing to their lack of knowledge of the Evangel.[2] During the earlier period of his change of opinions he was quite convinced, that a pernicious self-righteousness (that of the "*iustitiarii*") was rampant amongst both clergy and religious; not only in the houses of his own Congregation, but throughout the Church, a painstaking observance of the law and a scrupulous fulfilment of their duty by the clergy and monks constituted a danger to the true spirit of the Gospel, as he understood it. It was his polemics which then caused him to be obsessed with the idea, that the whole world had been seized upon by

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 400 ("Tischreden"). Cp. Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 186: "*Cum summo fletu spectatorum.*"

[2] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 7, p. 239; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 234.

the self-righteous. It was his polemics again, which, later, made him regard the whole world as full of immoral clerics.

The extravagance of Luther's utterances in his fight against clerical celibacy might perhaps be regarded as due to the secluded life he had led at Wittenberg during the years he was a monk, which prevented him from knowing the true state of things. Experience gained by more extensive travel and intercourse with others might indeed have corrected his views. But, as a matter of fact, he was not altogether untravelled; besides visiting Rome and Southern Germany he had been to Heidelberg, Worms and Cologne. His stay at the latter city is particularly noteworthy, for there he was in the heart of the very region of which Wimpfeling had given so favourable an account. Can he, during the long journey on foot and in his conversations with his brother monks there, not have convinced himself, that the clergy residing in that city were by no means sunk in immorality and viciousness? His visit to Cologne coincided in all probability with the general Chapter which Staupitz had summoned there at the commencement of May, 1512. Luther only recalls incidentally having seen there the bodies of the Three Kings; having swallowed all the legends told him concerning them; and having drunk such wine as he had never drunk before.[1]

[1] We may here remark concerning Luther's stay at Cologne (passed over in vol. i., p. 38 f., for the sake of brevity), that at the Chapter then held by Staupitz—to whose party Luther had now gone over—the former probably refrained, in his official capacity, from putting in force his plans for an amalgamation of the Observantines and the Conventuals of the Saxon Province. There is no doubt that Luther came to Cologne from Wittenberg, whither he had betaken himself on his return from Rome. After the Chapter at Cologne he made preparations for his promotion. Possibly the project of securing the Doctorate was matured at Cologne. He speaks of the relics of the Three Kings in a sermon of January 5th, of which two accounts have been preserved ("Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 1, p. 22: "I have seen them." "I too have seen them"). In the so-called "Bibelprotokollen," of 1539, he says (*ibid.*, p. 585): "At Cologne I drank a wine *quod penetrabat in mensa manum*" (which probably means, was so fiery that soon after drinking it he felt a tingling down to his finger-tips). "Never in all my life have I drunk so rich a wine." Cp., for the Cologne Chapter, Kolde, "Die deutsche Augustinerkongregation," p. 242 f., and for the same and Luther's Cologne visit, Walter Köhler, "Christl. Welt," 1908, No. 30; N. Paulus, "Hist.-pol. Bl.," 142, 1908, p. 749; and G. Kawerau, "Theol. Stud. und Krit.," 81, 1908, p. 348. Buchwald refers to a statement of Luther's on a monument at Cologne ("Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 371="Tischreden," ed. Förstemann, 4, p. 625) in "Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 2, p. 609.

Two Concluding Pictures towards the History of Woman.

We may, in conclusion, give two pictures which cast a new and lurid light on what has gone before.

Luther's standpoint, and, no less, the confusion which had arisen in married life and the humiliations to which many women were exposed, come out clearly in the story of his relations with the preacher Jodocus Kern and his spouse. Kern, an apostate monk, had wedded at Nuremberg Ursula Tagler, an ex-nun from the convent of Engelthal. On Dec. 24, 1524, Luther joyously commended him as "a monk, metamorphosed into a married man," to the care of Spalatin.[1] When Kern went to Saxony in search of a post the girl refused to accompany him until he had found employment. During his absence she began to regret the step she had taken, and the letters she received from her former Prioress determined her to return no more to her husband. The persuasion of her Lutheran relatives indeed induced her to go to Allstedt after Kern had been appointed successor to Thomas Münzer in that town, but there her horror only grew for the sacrilegious union she had contracted. Coercion was quite fruitless. The minister, at the advice of her own relatives, treated her very roughly, forced her to eat meat on Good Friday and refused to listen when she urged him to return to the Catholic Church. Having made an attempt to escape to Mansfeld, her case was brought before the secular Courts; she was examined by the commissioner of Allstedt on January 11, 1526, when she declared, that it was against her conscience to look upon Kern as her husband, that her soul was dearer to her than her body and that she would rather die than continue to endure any longer the bonds of sin. This the commissioner reported to the Elector Johann, and the latter, on Jan. 17, forwarded her statement to Luther, together with Kern's account, for the purpose of hearing from one so "learned in Scripture" "how the matter ought to be treated and disposed of in accordance with God's Holy Writ."[2]

Luther took a week to reply: The Allstedt woman was suffering such "temptations from the devil and men, that it would verily be a wonder if she could resist them." The only means of keeping her true to the Evangel and to her

[1] "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 86. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 308.

duty would be to send her to her people at Nuremberg. Should, even there, " the devil refuse to yield to God's good exhortation " then she would have to " be allowed to go," and " be reckoned as dead," and then the pastor might marry another. Out of the scandal that the wanton spirit had given through her God might yet work some good. " The Evangel neither will nor can be exempt from scandals."[1]

The unhappy nun was, as a matter of fact, forcibly brought to Nuremberg and placed amongst Lutheran surroundings instead of being conveyed to her convent at Engelthal, as the laws of the Empire demanded. From thence she never returned to Allstedt. Kern, during the proceedings, had declared that he did not want her against her conscience, and was ready to submit to the Word of God and to comply exactly with whatever this imposed. In accordance therewith he soon found a fresh bride. During the Visitations, in 1533, he was charged with bigamy and was reprimanded for being a " drinker and gambler," although his industry and talents were at the same time recognised. Nothing is known of his later doings.[2]

Two open letters addressed to Luther by Catholics in 1528 form a companion picture to the above. They portray the view taken by many faithful Catholics of Luther's own marriage.

In that year two Professors at the Leipzig University, Johann Hasenberg and Joachim von der Heyden, published printed circulars addressed to Luther and Catherine von Bora, admonishing them—now that ten years had elapsed since Luther first attacked the Church—on their breaking of their vows, their desecration of the Sacrament of Matrimony and their falling away from the Catholic faith.[3] It is probable that Duke George of Saxony had something to do with this joint attack.[4] It is also likely that hopes of

[1] Jan. 25, 1526, *ibid.*, p. 312.

[2] Cp. Enders on the letter last quoted.

[3] " Briefwechsel Luthers," 6, p. 322 f. Hasenberg's Latin letter, Aug. 10, 1528, p. 334 ff.; v. der Heyden's German one of same date.

[4] Cp. Duke George's fierce letter to Luther of Dec. 28, 1525 (" Briefwechsel," 5, p. 285 ff.), which was also printed forthwith. He will speak freely and openly to him, he says: " Seek the hypocrites amongst those who call you a prophet, a Daniel, the Apostle of the Germans and an Evangelist." " At Wittenberg you have set up an asylum where all the monks and nuns who, by their robbing and

sterner measures on the part of the Imperial authorities also helped to induce the writers to put pen to paper.[1] In any case it was their plan, vigorously and before all the world, to attack the author of the schism in his most vulnerable spot, where it would not be easy for him to defend himself publicly. Master Hasenberg, a Bohemian, was one of George's favourites, who had made him three years previously Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He addressed his open letter to "Martinus Luderus," the "destroyer of the public peace and piety." Von der Heyden, known in Latin as Myricianus or Phrisomynensis (a Frisian by birth), was likewise a Master, and Papal and academic Notary at Leipzig. Of the two he was the younger. His letter was addressed to "Khete von Bhore, Luther's pretended wife," and served as preface to a printed translation he had made of the work: "*De lapsu virginis consecratæ*," then attributed to St. Ambrose.[2] Both epistles, according to one of the answers, must have been despatched by special messenger and delivered at Luther's house. They drew forth printed replies, some of which can be traced to Luther himself, while Euricius Cordus ridiculed the writers in a screed full of biting epigram.

The Leipzig letters, the first of which was also published in German, made a great sensation in German circles and constituted an urgent exhortation to thousands of apostates estranged from the Church by Luther's new doctrine on Christian freedom and on the nullity of vows.

Relentlessly Hasenberg put to Luther the questions: "Who has blasphemously slandered the pious promise of celibacy which priests, religious and nuns made to God, and which, throughout the ages, had been held sacred? Luderus. Who has shrouded

stealing, deprive us of our churches and convents find refuge." "When have more acts of sacrilege been committed by people dedicated to God than since your Evangel has been preached?" Did not Christ say: "By their fruits you shall know them"? All the great preachers of the faith have been "pious, respectable and truthful men, not proud, avaricious or unchaste." "Your marriage is the work, not of God, but of the enemy. . . . Since both of you once took an oath not to commit unchastity lest God should forsake you, is it not high time that you considered your position?"—The greater part of the letter was incorporated by Cochlæus in his *Acta* (p. 119).

[1] On p. 336 von der Heyden says: Luther is "beginning to draw in his horns and is in great fear lest his nun should be unyoked."

[2] Nicetas, Bishop of Romatiana, may be the author of this anonymous work, printed in "P.L.," 16, col. 367–384.

in darkness free-will, good works, the ancient and unshaken faith, and that jewel of virginity which shines more brightly than the sun in the Church? Luderus. . . . Do you not yet see, you God-forsaken man, what all Christians think of your impudent behaviour, your temerity and voluptuousness?"

Referring to the sacrilegious union with Bora, he proceeds: "The enormity of your sin is patent. You have covered yourself with guilt in both your private and public life, particularly by your intercourse with the woman who is not your wife." In his indignation he does not shrink from comparing the ex-nun to a lustful Venus. He thunders against Luther: "You, a monk, fornicate by day and by night with a nun! And, by your writings and sermons, you drag down into the abyss with you ignorant monks and unlearned priests, questionable folk, many of whom were already deserving of the gallows. Oh, you murderer of the people!" "Yes, indeed, this is the way to get to heaven—or rather to Lucifer's kingdom! Why not say like Epicurus: There is no God and no higher power troubles about us poor mortals? Call upon your new gods, Bacchus, Venus, Mars, Priapus, Futina, Potina, Subigus and Hymenæus." His wish for Luther's spouse is, that she may take to heart the touching words of St. Ambrose to the fallen nun, so as not to fall from the abyss of a vicious life into the abyss of everlasting perdition prepared "for the devil and his Lutheran angels." And again, turning to Luther: "Have pity," he says, "on the nun, have compassion on the concubine and the children, your own flesh and blood. Send the nun back to the cloistral peace and penance which she forsook; free the unhappy creature from the embraces of sin and restore her to her mother the Church and to her most worthy and loving bridegroom Christ, so that she may again sing in unison with the faithful the Ambrosian hymn: '*Iesu, corona virginum.*'[1] . . . This much at least, viz. the dismissal of the nun, you cannot refuse us, however blindly you yourself may hurry along the sad path you have chosen. All the faithful, linked together throughout the world by the golden chain of charity, implore you with tears of blood; so likewise does your kind Mother, the Church, and the holy choirs of Angels, who rejoice over the sinner who returns penitent."

The writer, who seasons his counsel with so much bitterness, had plainly little hope of the conversion of the man he was addressing; his attack was centred on Catharine Bora. This was even more so the case with von der Heyden, a man of lively character who delighted in controversy; even from his first words it is clear that he had no intention of working on her kindlier feelings: "Woe to you, poor deluded woman." He upbraids her with her fall from light into darkness, from the vocation of the cloister into an "abominable and shameful life"; by her example she has brought "many poor, innocent children into a like misery"; formerly they had, as nuns, "lived in discipline

[1] For the full text of this anonymous hymn (incorporated in the Office for Virgins in the Breviary), see "P.L.," 16, col. 1221.

and purity," now they are "not merely in spiritual but in actual bodily want, nay, the poorest of the poor and have become the most despicable of creatures." Many of them now earned a living in "houses of ill-fame," they were frequently forced to pawn or sell their poor clothing, and sometimes themselves; they had hoped for the true freedom of the spirit that had been promised them, and, instead, they had been cast into a "horrible bondage of soul and body." Luther "in his pestilential writings had mistaken the freedom of the flesh for the true liberty of the spirit, in opposition to St. Paul, who had based this freedom solely on the Spirit of the Lord, as in 2 Cor. iii. 17: 'Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty'" Luther's preaching on liberty was one big lie, and another was his opinion that the "vow of virginity, where it was observed, was wicked and sinful, which statement was contrary to God and the whole of Scripture," and more particularly opposed to St. Paul, who strongly condemned those who broke their plighted faith to Christ; St. Paul had quite plainly recommended clerical celibacy when he wrote, that he who is without a wife is solicitous for the things that are the Lord's, but that the husband is solicitous for the things of the world, how best he may please his wife (1 Cor. vii. 32 f.).

Your "Squire Luther," he says to Bora, "behaves himself very impudently and proudly"; "he fancies he can fly, that he is treading on roses and is '*lux mundi*'"; he forgets that God has commanded us to keep what we have vowed; people gladly obeyed the Emperor, yet God was "an Emperor above all Emperors," and had still more right to fealty and obedience. Was she ignorant of Christ's saying: "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 62)? He reminds her of the severe penalties imposed by the laws of the Empire on those religious who were openly unfaithful to their vow, and, particularly, of the eternal punishment which should move her to leave the "horrid, black monk" (the Augustinians wore a black habit), to bewail like "St. Magdalene the evil she had done" and, by returning to the convent, to make "reparation for her infidelity to God." St. Ambrose's booklet on the fallen nun might lead her, and her companions in misfortune, to a "humble recognition" (of their sin), "and enable her to flee from the swift wrath of God and return to the fold of Christ, attain to salvation together with us all and praise the Lord for all eternity."

We catch a glimpse of the gulf which divided people's minds at that time in the very title of the reply by Euricius Cordus: "The Marburg literary society's peal of laughter over the screed against Luther of two Leipzig poets."[1]

[1] "*Literarii sodalitii apud Marpurgam aliquot cachinni super quodam duorum Lypsiensium poetarum in Lutherum scripto libello effusi*" (Marburgæ), 1528.

Two satirical and anonymous replies immediately appeared in print at Wittenberg, the one entitled: "New-Zeittung von Leyptzig," of which Luther "was not entirely innocent," and the other quite certainly his work, viz. "Ein newe Fabel Esopi newlich verdeudscht gefunden."[1] In the first reply spurious epistles are made to relate how the two Leipzig letters had been brought by a messenger to Luther's house, and had then been carried by the servants unread to the "back-chamber where it stinketh." "The paper having duly been submitted to the most ignominious of uses it was again packed into a bundle and despatched back to the original senders by the same messenger."[2]

In his "Newe Fabel" (of the Lion and the Ass) Luther implicitly includes von der Heyden, all the defenders of the Pope, and the Pope himself under the figure of the Ass (with the cross on its back); "there is nothing about the Ass that is not worthy of royal and papal honours."[3] The author of the letter he calls an ass's head and sniveller; the very stones of Leipzig would spit upon him; he was the "horse-droppings in which the apples were packed"; his art had brought on him "such an attack of diarrhœa that all of us have been bespattered with his filth"; "If you wish to devour us, you might begin downstairs at the commode," etc.[4]

We find nothing in either writing in the nature of a reply—of which indeed he considered the Leipzig authors unworthy—except the two following statements: firstly, Luther had sufficiently instructed his faithful wife, and the world in general, "that the religious life was wrong";[5] secondly, Ambrose, Jerome, or whoever wrote the booklet, "had stormed and raved like a demon" in that work, which was "more heretical than Catholic, against the nun who had yielded to her sexual instincts; he had not spoken like a Doctor, . . . but as one who wished to drive the poor prostitute into the abyss of hell; a murderer of souls pitted against a poor, feeble, female vessel."[6] Hence Luther's views are fairly apparent in the replies.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 539 ff. (with the editor's opinion on the authorship); Erl. ed., 64, pp. 324–337.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 540=339. The writing aptly concludes: ". . . *tuo, vates, carmine tergo nates.*"

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 548=330.

[4] *Ibid.*, 547=327 f.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 544=344.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 553 f.=335 f.

The Church, yea, even the Church of the earliest times, was made to bear the curse of having degraded woman and of having, by the religious life, declared war on marriage.

A contemporary, Petrus Silvius, who read Luther's writings with indignation and disgust, wrote, in 1530: "Luther, with his usual lies and blasphemy, calumniates the Christian Church and now says, that she entirely rejected and condemned matrimony."[1]

In what has gone before these falsehoods concerning the earlier degradation and his own exaltation of woman have been refuted at some length; the detailed manner in which this was done may find its vindication in the words of yet another opponent of Luther's, H. Sedulius, who says: "It must be repeated again and again, that it is an impudent lie to say we condemn marriage."[2]

[1] "Sermones dominicales des gnadenreichen Predigers Andree Prolis" (with notes), Leipzig, 1530, fol. K. 4'.

[2] "*Apologeticus adv. Alcoranum Franciscanorum pro Libro Conformitatum,*" Antverpiæ, 1607, p. 101.

CHAPTER XXIII

FRESH CONTROVERSIES WITH ERASMUS (1534, 1536) AND DUKE GEORGE († 1539)

1. Luther and Erasmus Again

In reply to Luther's "*De servo arbitrio*" against Erasmus the latter had published, in 1526, a sharp retort entitled "*Hyperaspistes*," which, in the following year, he enlarged by adding to it a second part.[1] In this work the author's able pen brings into the light of day the weakness of Luther's objections, his distortion of the Church's teaching, his frequent misrepresentations of Erasmus and his own self-contradictions.

Luther did not then reply to the work of the chief of the Humanists. In the ensuing years, however, he became painfully aware that the hostility of Erasmus had lost him many adherents belonging to the Erasmian school. A great cleavage had become apparent in the scholar's circle of friends till then so closely united, the greater number taking their master's side against the smaller group which remained true to Luther. It was in vain that several of Erasmus's admirers intervened and besought Luther to spare the feelings of the elder man. The Wittenberg professor made many cutting allusions to his opponent and assumed more and more an attitude which foreboded another open outburst of furious controversy.

With the art peculiar to him, he came to persuade himself, that the champion of free-will was hostile to the idea of any Divine supremacy over the human will, scoffed at all religion, denied the Godhead and was worse than any persecutor of the Church; he was confirmed in this belief by the sarcastic sayings about his Evangel, to which Erasmus gave vent in his correspondence and conversations, and which occasionally came to Luther's knowledge. It is true

[1] "Opp.," ed. Lugd., 9, col. 1249 *seq.*

that if we look at the matter through Luther's spectacles we can understand how certain darker sides of Erasmus and his Humanist school repelled him. Luther fixed on these, and, as was his wont, harshly exaggerated and misrepresented them. The too-great attention bestowed on the outward form, seemingly to the detriment of the Christian contents, displeased him greatly; still more so did the undeniable frivolity with which sacred things, still dear to him, were treated. At the same time it was strange to him, and rightly so, how little heed the Humanists who remained faithful to the Church paid to the principle of authority and of ecclesiastical obedience, preferring to follow the lax example set by Erasmus himself, more particularly during the first period of his career; they appeared to submit to the yoke of the Church merely formally and from force of habit, and showed none of that heart-felt conviction and respect for her visible supremacy which alone could win the respect of those without.[1]

Schlaginhaufen has noted down the following remark made by Luther in 1532 when a picture of Erasmus was shown him. "The cunning of his mode of writing is perfectly expressed in his face. He does nothing but mock at God and religion. When he speaks of our Holy Christ, of the Holy Word of God and the Holy Sacraments, these are mere fine, big words, a sham and no reality. . . . Formerly he annoyed and confuted the Papacy, now he draws his head out of the noose."[2] In the same year, and according to the same reporter, he declared: "Erasmus is a knave incarnate. . . . Were I in good health, I should inveigh against him. To him the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are something ludicrous. . . . Erasmus is as sure there is no God as I am that I can see. Lucian himself was not so bold and impudent as Erasmus."[3]

At Easter of the following year Veit Dietrich, who lived in Luther's house, announced in a letter to Nuremberg, that the storm was about to break: Luther was arming himself against Erasmus, reading his books carefully and gathering together his blasphemies. The same writer in a collection of Luther's conversations not yet published quotes the following outbursts: "Erasmus makes use of ambiguities, intentionally and with malice, this I shall prove against him. . . . Were I to cut open Erasmus's heart, I should find nothing but mockeries of the Trinity, the Sacraments, etc. To him the whole thing is a joke."[4]

[1] See vol. ii., p. 242 ff.
[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 29. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 96 f.
[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 311.

And yet, at that very time, Erasmus, who, as years passed, had come to regret his earlier faults of the pen,[1] was engaged in composing serious and useful works, in which, though not unfaithful to his older style, he sought to defend the dogmas of religion and the authority of the Church. In March his "*Explanatio symboli, decalogi et dominicæ precationis*" was issued at Basle by Froben; another important work of the same year, appearing in the guise of an exposition of Psalm lxxxiv., contained counsels how best to restore the unity of the Church and to root out abuses. Therein he does not deny the duty of submitting to the Church, but recommends both sides to be ready to give and take.

When Luther's little son Hans had, in his Latin lessons, to study some works composed by Erasmus for the young, his father wrote out for him the following warning: "Erasmus is a foe to all religion and an arch-enemy of Christ; he is the very type of an Epicurus and Lucian. This I, Martin Luther, declare in my own handwriting to you, my very dear son Johann, and, through you, to all my children and the holy Church of Christ."[2]

Luther's pent-up wrath at length vented itself in print. He had received a letter sent him from Magdeburg, on Jan. 28, 1534, by Nicholas Amsdorf, the old friend who knew so well how to fan the flames of enthusiasm for the new teaching, and who now pointed out Erasmus as the source whence George Wicel had drawn all his material for his latest attack on Lutheranism.[3] It was high time, he wrote, that Luther should paint Erasmus "in his true colours and show that he was full of ignorance and malice." This he would best do in a tract "On the Church," for this was the Erasmians' weak point: They stick to the Church, because "bishops and cardinals make them presents of golden vessels," and then "they cry out: Luther's teaching is heresy, having been condemned by Emperor and Pope." "I, on the other hand, see all about me the intervention and the wonders of God; I see that faith is a gift of God Who works when and where He wills, just as he raised His Son Christ from the dead. Oh, that you could see the country folk here and admire in them the glory of Christ!"

The letter pleased Luther so well that he determined to print it, appending to it a lengthy answer to Amsdorf, both being published together.[4]

In this answer, before launching out into invective against

[1] See vol. ii., p. 249 ff.
[2] "Luthers Briefwechsel," 9, p. 368 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 382.
[4] *Ibid.*, 10, p. 8 ff., about March 11, 1534.

Erasmus he joins in his friend's enthusiastic praise of the Evangel which has dawned: "Our cause was heard at Augsburg before the Emperor and the whole world, and has been found blameless; they could not but recognise the purity of our teaching. . . . We have confessed Christ before the evil generation of our day, and He too will confess us before God the Father and His angels." "Wicel, I shall vanquish by silence and contempt, as my custom is. How many books I have disposed of and utterly annihilated merely by my silence, Eck, Faber, Emser, Cochlæus and many others could tell. Had I to fight with filth, I should, even if victorious, get dirty in the process. Hence I leave them to revel in their blasphemy, their lying and their calumny."

He might, he proceeds, leave Erasmus too to dissolve into smoke like those others. For a long time past he had looked on him as one crazy ("*delirus*"); since he had given birth to the "*viperaspides*" (i.e. "brood of vipers," a play on the title of the "*Hyperaspistes*") he had given up all hopes of his theology, but would follow Amsdorf's advice and expose his malice and ignorance to the world.

In contradiction to the facts he goes on to declare, that, in his "*Explanatio symboli*," of 1533, Erasmus had "slyly planned" to undermine all respect for the Christian doctrines, and for this purpose ingratiated himself with his readers and sought to befool them, as the serpent did in Paradise. The Creed was nothing to him but a "fable,"—in support of which Luther adduces what purports to be a verbal quotation—nothing but the "mouthpiece and organ of Satan"; his method was but "a mockery of Christ"; according to him, the Redeemer had come into the world simply to give an example of holiness; His taking flesh of a virgin Erasmus described in obscene and blasphemous language; naturally the Apostles fared no better at his hands, and he even said of John the Evangelist, "*meros crepat mundos*" (because he mentions the "world" too often): there were endless examples of this sort to be met with in the writings of Erasmus. He was another Democrites or Epicurus; even what was doubtful in his statements had to be taken in the worst sense, and he himself (Luther) would be unable to believe this serpent even

should he come to him with the most outspoken confession of Christianity.

All this he wrote seemingly with the utmost conviction, as though it were absolutely certain. At about that same time he sent a warning to his friend Amsdorf not to allege anything against Erasmus, which was not certain, should he be tempted to write against him.[1] Yet Luther's fresh charges were undoubtedly unjust to his opponent, although his letter really does forcibly portray much that was blameworthy in Erasmus, particularly in his earlier work, for instance, his ambiguous style of writing, so often intentionally vague and calculated to engender scepticism.[2]

Not even in Luther's immediate circle did this letter meet with general approval. Melanchthon wrote, on March 11, 1534, to Camerarius: "Our Arcesilaus [Luther] is starting again his campaign against Erasmus; this I regret; the senile excitement of the pair disquiets me."[3] On May 12, 1535, he even expressed himself as follows to Erasmus, referring to the fresh outbreak of hostilities: "The writings published here against you displease me, not merely on account of my private relations with you, but also because they do no public good."[4]

Boniface Amerbach, a friend of Erasmus's, sent Luther's letter to his brother, calling it a "*parum sana epistola*," and adding, "Hervagius [the Basle printer] told me recently that Luther, for more than a year, had been suffering from softening of the brain ('*cephalœa*'), I think the letter proves this, and also that he has not yet recovered, for in it there is no trace of a sound mind."[5]

Recent Protestant historians speak of the letter as "on the whole hasty and dictated by jealousy,"[6] and as based "in part on inaccurate knowledge and a misapprehension of Erasmus's writings."[7]

[1] On March 31, 1534, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 36.

[2] At the conclusion Luther says of the young people: "*Hac levitate et vanitate paulatim desuescit a religione, donec abhorreat et penitus profanescat.*" And: "*Dominus noster Iesus, quem mihi Petrus non tacet Deum, sed in cuius virtute scio et certus sum me sœpius a morte liberatum, in cuius fide hœc omnia incepi et hactenus effeci, quœ ipsi hostes mirantur, ipse custodiat et liberet nos in finem. Ipse est Dominus Deus noster verus.*"

[3] "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 709: γεροντικὰ πάθη. [4] *Ibid.*, 3, p. 69.

[5] On April 15, 1534, Burckhardt-Biedermann, "Bonif. Amerbach," 1894, p. 297. Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 10, p. 24.

[6] Enders, *ibid.*, p. 23. [7] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 312.

Shortly after this Luther expressed himself with rather more moderation in a Preface which he composed for Anton Corvinus's reply to Erasmus's proposals for restoring the Church to unity. In this writing he sought to make his own the more moderate tone which dominated Corvinus's works. He represented as the chief obstacle to reunion the opinion prevalent amongst his opponents of the consideration due to the Church. Their one cry was "the Church, the Church, the Church"; this has confirmed Erasmus in his unfounded opposition to the true Evangel, in spite of his having himself thrown doubt on all the doctrines of the Church.[1] He could not as yet well undertake a work on the subject of the Church, such as Amsdorf wished, as he was fully occupied with his translation of the Bible. In the Preface referred to above he announced, however, his intention of doing so later. The result was his "Von den Conciliis und Kirchen," of 1539, which will be treated of below.[2]

Erasmus was unwilling to go down to the grave bearing the calumnies against his faith which Luther had heaped upon him. He owed it to his reputation to free himself from these unjust charges. This he did in a writing which must be accounted one of the most forcible and sharpest which ever left his pen. The displeasure and annoyance which he naturally felt did not, however, interfere with his argument or prevent him from indulging in sparkling outbursts of wit. Amerbach had judged Luther's attack "insane"; Erasmus, for his part, addressed his biting reply to "one not sober." The title of the writing, published at Basle in 1534, runs: "*Purgatio adversus epistolam non sobriam M. Lutheri.*"[3]

It was an easy matter for Erasmus to convict the author of manifest misrepresentation and falsehood.

He repeatedly accuses the writer of downright lying. What he charges me with concerning my treatment of the Apostle John, "is a palpable falsehood. Never, even in my dreams, did the words which he quotes as mine enter my mind." Such a lie he can have "welded together" only by joining two expressions used in other contexts.[4]

As for his alleged blasphemy concerning Christ's birth from

[1] "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 526 *seq.*
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 278 ff. [3] "Opp.," 3, col. 1494 *seq.*
[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 663, admits that Luther's charge was "groundless."

the Virgin Mary, Erasmus protests: "I can swear I never said anything of the kind either in a letter, as Luther makes out, though he fails to say which, or in any of my writings." Moreover he was a little surprised to find Luther, whose own language was not remarkable for modesty, suddenly transformed into a champion of cleanliness of speech: "Everything, bridegroom, bride and even best man, seems of a sudden to have become obscene to this Christian Luther," etc.

Erasmus also points out that the passage concerning the Creed being a mere fable had been invented by Luther himself by means of deliberate "distortion" and shameful misinterpretation: "No text," he exclaims, "is safe from his calumny and misrepresentation." As for what Luther had said, viz. that "whoever tells untruths lies even when he speaks the truth," and that he would refuse to believe Erasmus even were he to make an orthodox profession of faith, Erasmus's retort is: "Whoever spoke this bit of wisdom was assuredly out of his senses and stood in need of hellebore" (the remedy for madness). As to the charge of deliberately leading others into infidelity he does not shrink from telling Luther, that "he will find it easier to persuade all that he has gone mad out of hatred, is suffering from some other form of mental malady, or is led by some evil genius."[1]

Luther took good care to say nothing in public about the rebuff he had received from Erasmus; nor did he ever make any attempt to refute the charge of having "lied."

In the circle of his intimate friends, however, he inveighed all the more against the leader of the Humanists as a sceptic and seducer to infidelity.

After Erasmus's death he declared that, till his end (1536), he lived "without God." He refused to give any credence to the report that he had displayed faith and piety at the hour of death. Erasmus's last words were: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me. I will extol the mercies of the Lord and His judgments."[2] Luther, on the other hand, in his Latin Table-Talk says: "He died just as he lived, viz. like an Epicurean, without a clergyman and without comfort. . . . '*Securissime vixit, sicut etiam morixit,*'" he adds jestingly. "Those pious words attributed to him are, sure enough, an invention."[3]

[1] Most of the above passages from Erasmus's reply are quoted by Enders, p. 25 ff. The outspoken passage last quoted is given in Latin in vol. iii., p. 136, n. 2.

[2] Quoted by Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 663, p. 313, n. 1.

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, I, p. 275: "*Vixit et decessit ut Epicureus sine aliquo ministro et consolatione. . . . Multa quidem præclara scripsit, habuit ingenium præstantissimum, otium tranquillum. . . . In agone non expetivit ministrum verbi neque sacramenta, et fortasse illa verba suæ confessionis in agone 'Fili Dei miserere mei' illi affinguntur.*" Cp. Luther's words in 1544 in Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 343: "He died

Erasmus, he says,—revealing for once the real ground of all his hatred—" might have been of great service to the cause of the Evangel ; often was he exhorted to this end. . . . But he considered it better that the Gospel should perish and not be preached than that all Germany should be convulsed and all the Princes be troubled with risings." " He refuses to teach Christ," he said of him during his lifetime ; " he does not take it seriously, that is the way with all Italians and with them he has had much intercourse. One page of Terence is better than his whole '*Dialogus*' or his '*Colloquium*' ; he mocks not only at religion but even at politics and at public life. He has no other belief than the Roman ; he believes what Clement VII believes ; this he does at his command, and yet at the same time sneers at it. . . . I fear he will die the death of the wicked."[1] After the scholar's decease, Luther naturally desired to find his prophecy fulfilled.

An obvious weapon, one constantly employed against Luther by his foes, was to twit him with his lies ; a reply addressed to him in 1531 by a friend of George of Saxony, Franz Arnoldi of Cöllen, near Meissen, was no exception to the rule. In this little work entitled " Antwort auf das Büchlein," etc., it is not merely stated that Luther, in his " Auff das vermeint Keiserlich Edict," had put forward " as many lies as there were words,"[2] but it is also pointed out that the Augsburg Edict, " which is truly Christian and requires no glosses," had been explained by him most abominably and shamefully, and given a meaning such as His Imperial Majesty and those who promulgated or executed it had never even dreamt of."[3] " He promises us white and gives us black. This has come down to him from his ancestor, the raging devil, who is the father of lies. . . . With such lies does Martin Luther seek to deck out his former vices."[4]

'*sine crux et sine lux*' " ; here again Luther says he had been the cause of many losing body and soul and had been the originator of the Sacramentarians. See our vol. ii., p. 252, n. 1, for further details of Erasmus's end. We read in Mathesius, p. 90 (May, 1540) : " The Doctor said : He arrogated to himself the Divinity of which he deprived Christ. In his '*Colloquia*' he compared Christ with Priapus [Kroker remarks : ' Erasmus did *not* compare Christ with Priapus '], he mocked at Him in his ' Catechism ' [' *Symbolum* '], and particularly in his execrable book the '*Farragines*.' "

[1] See the whole passage in " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 272 *seq.*

[2] " Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 89. See above, p. 101.

[3] " Werke," *ibid.*, p. 92.

[4] *Ibid.*

2. Luther on George of Saxony and George on Luther

The hostile relations between Luther and Duke George of Saxony found expression at the end of 1525 in a correspondence, which throws some light on the origin and extent of the tension and on the character of both men. The letters exchanged were at once printed and spread rapidly through the German lands, one serving to enlist recruits to Luther's standard, the other constituting a furious attack on the innovations.[1]

Luther's letter of Dec. 21, 1525, to the Duke, "his gracious master," was "an exhortation to join the Word of God," as the printed title runs. Sent at a time when the peasants, after their defeat, had deserted Luther, and when the latter was attaching himself all the more closely to those Royal Courts which were well disposed towards him, the purpose of the letter was to admonish the chief opponent of the cause, "not so barbarously to attack Christ, the corner-stone," but to accept the Evangel "brought to light by me." He bases his "exhortation" on nothing less than the absolute certainty of his mission and teaching. "Because I know it, and am sure of it, therefore I must, under pain of the loss of my own soul, care, beg and implore for your Serene Highness's soul." He had already diligently prayed to God to "turn his heart," and he was loath now "to pray against him for the needs of the cause"; his prayers and those of his followers were invincibly powerful, yea, "stronger than the devil himself," as the failure of all George's and his friends' previous persecutions proved, "though men do not see or mark God's great wonders in me."

It is hard to believe that the author, in spite of all he says, really expected his letter to effect the conversion of so energetic and resolute an opponent; nevertheless, his assurances of his peaceable disposition were calculated to promote the Lutheran cause in the public eye, whatever the answer might be. He will, he says in this letter, once again "beseech the Prince in a humble and friendly manner, perhaps for the last time"; George and Luther might soon be called away by God; "I have now no more to lose in

[1] Luther to Duke George, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 338 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 281, with amended date and colophon). George to Luther, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 285 ff.

this world but my carcase, which each day draws closer to the grave." Formerly he had, it is true, spoken "harshly and crossly" to him, as God also does "to those whom He afterwards blesses and consoles"; he had, however, also published "many kindlier sermons and booklets in which everyone might discern that I mean ill to no one but desire to serve every man to the best of my ability."

The letter partook of the nature of a manifesto, intended to place the Catholic-minded Prince publicly in the wrong, if it did not, as was hardly to be expected, draw him over to the side of the innovators.

The Duke replied, on Dec. 28, in a manner worthy of his status in the Empire and of the firm attitude he had maintained so far. "As a layman" he refused to enter upon a "Scriptural disputation" with Luther; it was not untrue that Luther had attacked him "harshly and contrary to the ordinance of God and the command of the Gospel"; Luther might, if he chose, compare his former severity with that of God, but he certainly would not find, "in the Gospels or anywhere in Scripture," abusive epithets such as he employed; for him, as a sovereign, to have had to put up with such treatment from a man under the ban of the Empire, had cost him much; he had been compelled to put pressure on himself to accept "persecution for justice' sake." Luther's "utterly shameful abuse of our most gracious Lord, the Roman Emperor," made it impossible for him to be Luther's "gracious master."

Formerly, so George admits, when Luther's writings "first appeared, some of them had pleased him. Nor were we displeased to hear of the Disputation at Leipzig, for we hoped from it some amendment of the abuses amongst Christians." Luther, however, in his very hearing at Leipzig, had advanced Hussite errors, though he had afterwards promised him privately to "write against them" in order to allay any suspicion; in spite of this he had written in favour of Hus and against the Council of Constance and against "all our forefathers."

He, for his part, held fast to the principle, "that all who acted in defiance of obedience and separated themselves from the Christian Churches were heretics and should be regarded as such, for so they had been declared by the Holy Councils, all of which you deny, though it does not beseem you nor any Christian." Hence he would "trouble little" about Luther's Evangel, but would continue to do his best to exclude it from his lands.

"One cause for so doing is given us in the evil fruit which springs from it; for neither you nor any man can say that aught

but blasphemy of God, of the Blessed and Holy Sacrament, of the most Holy Mother of God and all the Saints has resulted from your teaching; for in your preaching all the heresies condemned of old are revived, and all honourable worship of God destroyed to an extent never witnessed since the days of Sergius [the monk supposed to have taught Mohammed]. When have more acts of sacrilege been committed by persons dedicated to God than since you introduced the Evangel? Whence has more revolt against authority come than from your Evangel? When has there been such plundering of poor religious houses? When more robbery and thieving? When were there so many escaped monks and nuns at Wittenberg as now?"[1] etc.

"Had Christ wanted such an Evangel, He would not have said so often: Peace be with you! St. Peter and St. Paul would not have said that the authorities must be obeyed. Thus the fruits of your teaching and Evangel fill us with horror and disgust. We are, however, ready to stake body, soul, goods and honour in defence of the true Gospel, in which may God's Grace assist us!"

After urgent admonitions offered to Luther "as New-Year wishes," more particularly to sever his connection with the nun, he promises him his assistance should he obey him: "We shall spare no pains to obtain the clemency of our most gracious Lord the Emperor, so far as is possible to us here, and you need have no fear of any ill on account of what you have done against us, but may expect all that is good. That you may see your way to this is our hope. Amen."

Few Princes were to suffer worse treatment at Luther's hands than Duke George. The Duke frequently retaliated by charging Luther with being a liar.

He wrote, for instance, in 1531, that Luther simply bore witness to the fact that the "spirit of lying" dwelt in him, "who speaks nothing but his own fabrications and falsehood." "You forsworn Luther," he says to him, "you who treacherously and falsely calumniate His Imperial Majesty."[2]

Luther's anger against the most influential Prince in the Catholic League was not diminished by the fact, that the Duke severely censured the real evils on the Catholic side, was himself inclined to introduce reforms on his own, and even, at times, to go too far. Such action on George's part annoyed Luther all the more, because in all this the Duke would not hear of any relinquishing of ancient dogma. Hence we find Luther, quite contrary to the real state of the

[1] More in the same strain above, p. 173, n. 4.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 134.

case, abusing George as follows : The Duke was secretly in favour of the new teaching and his resistance was merely assumed ; he was opposed to the reception of the Sacrament under both kinds, only because he wished to tread under foot the whole teaching of Christ, to forbid Holy Scripture altogether and particularly to condemn St. Paul ;[1] if he, Luther, were not allowed to abuse the Duke, then neither might he call the devil a murderer and a liar.[2] " He is my sworn, personal enemy," he says, and proceeds in the same vein : " Had I written in favour of the Pope, he would now be against the Pope, but because I write against the Pope, he fights for him and defends him."[3]

Luther, as his manner was, announced as early as 1522 that " the Judgment of God would inevitably overtake him."[4] When the Duke, in 1539, had died the death of a Christian, Luther said : " It is a judgment on those who despise the one true God." " It is an example when a father and two fine grown-up sons sink into the grave in so short a time, but I, Dr. Luther, prophesied that Duke George and his race would perish."[5] There was, according to Luther, only one ray of hope for the eternal happiness of the Duke, viz. that, when his son Hans lay dying in 1537, not so long before his own death, it was reported he had consoled him in the Lutheran fashion. According to Luther he had encouraged him with the article on Justification by Faith in Christ and reminded him, " that he must look only to Christ, the Saviour of the world, and forget his own works and merits."[6] Needless to say the pious thoughts suggested to the dying man were simply those usually placed before the mind of faithful Catholics at the hour of death.

Luther's imagination and his polemics combine to trace a picture of Duke George which is as characteristic of himself as it is at variance with the figure of the Duke, as recorded in history. He accused the Duke of misgovernment and tyranny and incited his subjects against him ; and, in his worst fit of indignation, launched against the Duke

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 411, Table-Talk.
[2] *Ibid.*, 31, p. 250 ff. [3] *Ibid.*, 61, p. 343, Table-Talk.
[4] To the Elector Frederick of Saxony, March 5, 1522, " Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 107 (" Briefwechsel," 3, p. 296).
[5] " Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 343 f., Table-Talk.
[6] *Ibid.*, 58, p. 412 (Table-Talk), where Luther bases his tale on a remark of the Protestant Elector Johann Frederick of Saxony.

the booklet "Widder den Meuchler zu Dresen" (1531).[1] Yet the Saxons generally did not regard the Duke's government as tyrannical or look upon him as an "assassin," not even the Lutherans who formed the majority. On the contrary, they were later on to acknowledge, that, under the Duke's reign, they had enjoyed "prosperity and peace" with the Emperor, amongst themselves and with their neighbours. His firmness and honour were no secret to all who knew him. The King of France admired his disinterestedness, when, in 1532, he rejected the proffered yearly pension of at least 5000 Gulden which was to detach him from the Empire. At the Diet of Worms this Catholic Duke had been the most outspoken in condemning the proposal made, that Luther should be refused a safe conduct for his return journey; he pointed out how much at variance this was with German ways and what a lasting shame it would bring on the German Princes. As for the rest he favoured the use of strong measures to safeguard Germany from religious and political revolution. He also befriended, more than any other German Prince or Bishop, those scholars who attacked Luther in print.

After the appearance of the libel "Widder den Meuchler zu Dresen," he wrote a reply entitled "About the insulting booklet which Martin Luther has published against the Dresden murderer," though it was issued in 1531, not under his own name, but under that of Franz Arnoldi.[2]

The work is more a vindication of the Empire's Catholic standpoint and of the honour of the Catholics against Luther's foul suspicions and calumnies, than a personal defence of his own cause. It is couched in the language we might expect from a fighter and a sovereign pelted with filth before the eyes of his own subjects. It hails expressions of the roughest against Luther, the convicted "rebel against the Emperor and all authority," the inventor of "slimy fabrications and palpable lies" not worth an answer, amongst which was the "downright false" assertion, that "the Papists are up in arms" against the Protestant Estates.[3] In order to understand its tone we must bear in mind Luther's own method of belabouring all his foes with the coarsest language at his command.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 413 ff.; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 108 ff. See our vol. ii., p. 295 f.

[2] "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 129 ff. [3] P. 135.

At the beginning of his writing the Duke says of Luther's abuse: "If both Lutherans and Papists could be reformed by vituperation and abuse, cursing and swearing, then His Imperial Roman Majesty, Christian kings, princes and lords would have had no need of a scholar; plenty other people, for instance, worn-out whores, tipsy boors and loose knaves, might have done it just as well without any assistance or help of yours."[1]

The following, taken from the Duke's writing, carries us back into the very thick of the excitement of those years:

"Who is the man who, contrary to God, law, justice and all Scripture and knowledge, has sacrilegiously robbed, stolen and taken from Christ all the possessions bestowed upon Him hundreds of years ago by emperors, kings, princes, lords, counts, knights, nobles, burghers and peasants, all of whom, out of fervent love and appreciation for His sacred Passion, His rosy blood and guiltless death, gave their gifts for the establishment of monasteries, parish-churches, altars, cells, hospitals, mortuaries, guilds, roods, etc., etc.? Why, Squire Martin, Dr. Luther!—Who has plundered and despoiled the poor village clergy—who were true pastors of the Church, ministers of the Sacraments, preachers and guides of souls—of their blood and sweat, their hardly earned yearly stipend, nay, their sacred gifts such as tithes, rents, offerings and Church dues, and that without any permission of the Ordinaries and contrary to God, to honour and to justice? Why, Dr. Pig-trough Luther!—Who has robbed, plundered and deprived God during the last twelve years of so many thousand souls and sent them down with bloody heads to Lucifer in the abyss of hell? Who, but the arch-murderer of souls, Dr. Donkey-ear Mertein Luther!—Who has robbed Christ of His wedded spouses—many of whom (though perhaps not all) had served Him diligently day and night for so many years in a lovely, spiritual life—and has brought them down to a miserable, pitiable and wicked mode of life? Shame upon you, you blasphemous, sacrilegious man, you public bordeller for all escaped monks and nuns, apostate priests and renegades generally!—Who has filched, robbed and stolen from his Imperial Roman Majesty, our beloved, innocent, Christian Prince Charles V., and from kings, princes and lords, the honour, respect, service, obedience and the plighted oath of their subjects (not of all, thank God) by false, seditious and damnable writings and doctrines? Why, sure, Dr. Luther!—Who has made so many thieves and scoundrels as are now to be found in every corner, amongst them so many runaway monks, so that in many places, as I hear, one is not safe from them either in the streets or at home? Why, Dr. Luther! That nothing might be left undone, he has also destroyed the religious houses of nuns.—'*Summa summarum*,' there would be so much to tell, that, for the sake of brevity, it must stick in the pen. . . . But I will show you from Scripture who was the first, the second and the third sacrilegious robber. The first was Lucifer, who, out of pride, tried to rob

[1] P. 130.

the Almighty of His glory, power, praise and service (Is. xiv. 12). He received his reward. The second was Aman, who stole from God the highest honour, viz. worship, for, in his malice, he caused himself to be worshipped as God. He was hanged on a gallows 50 ells high. Judas Scariothis stole from Christ and His Apostles the tenth penny of their daily living; he hanged himself. Luther, the fourth sacrilegious robber, has surpassed all men in iniquity; what his end and reward will be God alone knows."[1]

It has been said, that, among the defenders of Catholicism, no voice was raised which could compare in any way in emphasis and power with that of Luther. Döllinger in later life considered that, in comparison with Luther, his opponents could only "stammer"; what they advanced sounded "feeble, weak and colourless."[2] Yet, what we have just quoted from Duke George cannot in fairness be charged with weakness. Their indignation and fiery zeal inspired other Catholics too to express with eloquence and rudeness their conviction of the evil consequences of Luther's action.

[1] P. 144. [2] "Wiedervereinigung der christl. Kirchen," p. 53.

CHAPTER XXIV

MORAL CONDITIONS ACCOMPANYING THE REFORMATION
PRINCELY PATRONS

1. Reports from various Lutheran Districts

After Duke George of Saxony had been carried off by death on April 17, 1539, a sudden revulsion in favour of Lutheranism took place in his land. Duke Henry, his brother, who succeeded him, introduced the new teaching to which he had long been favourable. Luther came at once to Leipzig with Melanchthon, Jonas and Cruciger to render at least temporary assistance, by preaching and private counsel. In July of that same year an Evangelical Visitation was already arranged by Duke Henry on the lines of that in the Saxon Electorate; this was carried out by Luther's preachers.

Many abuses dating from Catholic times were prevalent amongst both people and parochial clergy. Concubinage in particular had increased greatly in the clerical ranks under the influence of the new ideas. Luther himself boasted of having advised "several parish-priests under Duke George to marry their cook secretly."[1] But much greater disorders than had previously existed crept in everywhere at the commencement of the change.

Luther himself was soon at a loss to discover any religious spirit or zeal for ecclesiastical affairs, either in the ruler or in his councillors. The Duke seemed to him "old, feeble and incapable." He complained, on March 3, 1540, to his friend Anton Lauterbach, then minister at Pirna: "I see well enough, that, at the Dresden Court there is an extraordinary unwillingness to advance the cause of God or man; there pride and greed of gain reign supreme. The old Prince can't do anything, the younger Princes dare not, and would not even had they the courage. May God keep the guidance of His Church in His own Hands until He finds suitable tools."[2] On the moral conditions

[1] Above, p. 38, and vol. iii., p. 262.
[2] Letters ed. De Wette, 5, p. 271.

at the Ducal Court he passes a startling and hasty judgment when he says, writing to his Elector in 1540, that there the "scandals were ten times worse" than those caused by the Hessian bigamy. He was annoyed to find that, even after the introduction of the new teaching, the courtiers and nobles thought only of replenishing their purses. He speaks of them as the "aristocratic harpies of the land," and exclaims: "These courtiers will end by eating themselves up by their own avarice."[1] They refused to support the ministers of the Word and disputed amongst themselves as to whose duty it was to do so; they did not hide their old contempt for Wittenberg, i.e. for its theologians and theology, and yet they expected Wittenberg to carry out the Visitations free of cost. "Even should you get nothing for the Visitation," he nevertheless instructs one of the preachers, "still you must hold it as well as you can, comfort souls to the best of your power and, in any case, expel the poisonous Papists."[2]

The unexpected and apparently so favourable change in the Duchy really did little to dispel his gloom, though he occasionally intones a hymn of gratitude and admiration for the working of Providence displayed in the change of rulers.

About this time (1539), in Brandenburg, the Elector Joachim II. also ushered in the innovations. The rights and possessions of the ancient Church fell a prey to the spoilers. Luther praised the ruler for going forward so bravely "to the welfare and salvation of many souls." He was, however, apprehensive lest the "roaring of the lion in high places" might influence the Elector; with the Divine assistance, however, he would not fear even this.[3] He showed himself strangely lenient in regard to the Elector's prudent retention of much more of the Catholic ceremonial than had been preserved in any other German land. Even the Elevation of the Sacrament at Mass (or rather at the sham Mass still in use) was tolerated by Luther; he writes: "We had good reasons for doing away with the elevation [of the Sacrament] here at Wittenberg, but perhaps at Berlin you have not."[4]

[1] To Johannes Cellarius, minister at Dresden, Nov. 26, 1540, Letters ed. De Wette, 5, p. 229.

[2] *Ibid.*, cp. the letter to Wenceslaus Link of Oct. 26, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 270: "*Proceres veteri odio despiciunt Wittembergam.*"

[3] Letter of Dec. 4, 1539, "Briefwechsel," *ibid.*, p. 313.

[4] To Provost George Buchholzer at Berlin, Dec. 4, 1539, *ibid.*, p. 316. At the Wittenberg Schlosskirche the elevation had gone before 1539, and soon after was discontinued throughout the Saxon Electorate. It was retained, however, in the parish church of Wittenberg until

In the Duchy of Prussia, formerly ecclesiastical property of the Teutonic Knights, the way had been paved for the apostasy of these Knights, all bound by the vow of chastity, by Luther's alluring tract "An die Herrn Deutschs Ordens, das sie falsche Keuscheyt meyden und zur rechten ehlichen Keuscheyt greyffen."[1] Albert, the Grand Master, who had visited Luther twice, as already narrated, seized upon the lands of the Order belonging to the Church and caused himself to be solemnly invested and proclaimed hereditary Duke of Prussia on April 10, 1525; thereupon Luther sent him his congratulations that God should have so graciously called him to this new Estate. The Grand Master, himself a married man, with the assistance of the two apostate Bishops of Samland and Pomerania, then established Lutheranism. As chief Bishop he assumed the position of head of the territorial Church, agreeably with the Protestant practice in the other German lands. The episcopal jurisdiction was transferred to the civil Consistorial Courts.

Violent appropriation of alien property, as well as illegal assumption of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, also characterised the advent of the new faith in Würtemberg. Duke Ulrich, who had been raised to the throne in 1534 by a breach of the peace of the Empire and contrary to all law and justice, thanks to the successful raid of Philip of Hesse (above, p. 47; vol. iii., p. 67 f.), continued to labour under the stigma attaching to the manner in which he had obtained the Duchy, in spite of the peace he had patched up with the Emperor. The religious transformation of the country was however, soon accomplished, thanks to his pressure.

The chief part in this, so far as Upper Würtemberg was concerned, devolved on the preacher, Ambrosius Blaurer (Blarer), who favoured the Zwinglian leanings of Bucer.

Blaurer was openly accused of deception and hypocrisy in the matter of his profession of faith. Though he had formerly sided with Zwingli in the denial of the Sacrament, he vindicated his Lutheran orthodoxy to his patron, the Duke, by means of a

Bugenhagen did away with it on June 25, 1542. Luther reserved to himself the liberty of reintroducing it should heresy or other reasons call for it. He had retained the elevation at Wittenberg for a while as a protest against Carlstadt's attacks on the Sacrament, at least such was the reason he gave in May, 1542, to Landgrave Philip, who wanted its abrogation. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 578.

[1] Dec., 1523, "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 232 ff.; Erl. ed., 29, p. 16 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 266).

formulary[1] tallying with Luther's doctrine on the Supper. Subsequently, however, he issued an "Apology," in which he declared he had not in the least altered his views. "Who does not see the deception?" wrote Luther's friend, Veit Dietrich; "formerly he made a profession of faith in our own words, and now he attacks everybody who says he has retracted his previous opinion."[2] Luther had been a prey to the greatest anxiety on learning that Blaurer had become the Duke's favourite. "If this be true," he wrote, "what hope is left for the whole of Upper Germany?"[3] Much as he had rejoiced at Blaurer's apparent retractation in the matter of the Sacrament, he was very mistrustful of his bewildering "Apology." "I only hope it be meant seriously," he declared; "it scandalises many that Blaurer should be so anxious to make out that he never thought differently. People find this hard to believe." "For the sake of unity I shall, however, put a favourable interpretation on everything. I am ready to forgive anyone who in his heart thinks aright, even though he may have been in error or hostile to me."[4] Thus he practically pledged himself to silence regarding the work.

Of "Blarer's" doings in Würtemberg, now won over to the new Evangel, the Bavarian agent, Hans Werner, a violent opponent of Duke Ulrich's, wrote: "He preaches every day; yet none save the low classes and common people, etc., attend his sermons, for these readily accept the Evangel of mine being thine and thine mine. *Item*, Blarer has full powers, writes hither and thither in the land, turns out here a provost, there a canon, vicar, rector or priest and banishes them from the country by order of Duke Ulrich; he appoints foreigners, Zwinglians or Lutheran scamps, of whom no one knows anything; all must have wife and child, and if there be still a priest found in the land, he is forced to take a wife."[5]

In the Würtemberg lowlands, north of Stuttgart, a zealous Lutheran, Erhard Schnepf, laboured for the destruction of the old Church system; Duke Ulrich also summoned Johann Brenz, the Schwäbisch-Hall preacher, to his land for two years.

At Christmas, 1535, Ulrich gave orders to all the prelates in his realm to dismiss the Catholic clergy in their districts and appoint men of the new faith, as the former "did nothing but blaspheme and abuse the Divine truth."[6] Even

[1] Cp. Enders, *ibid.*, 10, p. 98, n. 7.
[2] Letter to Coler, April 30, 1535. Enders, *ibid.*, p. 151, n. 5.
[3] To Justus Jonas, Dec. 17, 1534, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 98.
[4] To Erhard Schnepf at Stuttgart, May 15, 1535, *ibid.*, p. 150.
[5] Letter to the Chancellor Leonard v. Eck, Jan. 21, 1535, in Wille, "Anal. zur Gesch. Oberdeutschlands, 1534–1540" ("Zeitschr. für die Gesch. des Oberrheins," 37, p. 263 ff.), p. 293 f.
[6] G. Bossert in "Württemberg. KG.," ed. Calwer Verlagsverein, Calw, 1893, p. 335.

the assisting at Mass in neighbouring districts was prohibited by the regulation issued in the summer of 1536, which at the same time prescribed the attendance of Catholics at least once every Sunday and Holiday at the preaching of the new ministers of the Word; under this intolerable system of compulsion Catholics were reduced to performing all their religious exercises in their own homes.[1] The violent suppression of the monasteries and the sequestration of monastic property went hand in hand with the above. In the convents of women, which still existed, the nuns were forced against their will to listen to the sermons of the preachers. Church property was everywhere confiscated so far as the ancient Austrian law did not prevent it. The public needs and the scarcity of money were alleged as pretexts for this robbery. The Mass vestments and church vessels were allotted to the so-called poor-boxes. At Stuttgart, for instance, the costly church vestments were sold for the benefit of the poor. In the troubles many noble works of art perished, for "all precious metal was melted down and minted, nor were cases of embezzlement altogether unknown." "The Prince, with the approach of old age, manifested pitiable miserliness and cupidity."[2] Unfortunately he was left a free hand in the use of the great wealth that poured into his coffers. But, not even in the interests of the new worship, would he expend what was necessary, so that the vicarages fell into a deplorable state. In other matters, too, the new Church of the country suffered in consequence of the way in which Church property was handled. "The inevitable consequence was the rise of many quarrels, complaints were heard on all sides and even the Schmalkalden League was moved to remonstrate with Ulrich.[3]

Terrible details concerning the alienation of church and monastic property are reported from Würtemberg by contemporaries. The preacher Erhard Schnepf, the Duke's chief tool, was also his right hand in the seizure of property. Loud complaints concerning Schnepf's doings, and demands that he should be made to render an account, were raised even by such Protestants as Bucer and Myconius, and by the speakers at the religious conference at Worms. He found means, however, to evade this duty. One of those voices of the past bewails the treatment meted out to the unfortunate religious: "Even were

[1] Cp. *ibid.*, p. 336. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 347. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 348.

the Würtemberg monks and nuns all devils incarnate and no men, still Duke Ulrich ought not to proceed against them in so un-Christian, inhuman and tyrannical a fashion."[1]

The relentless work of religious subversion bore everywhere a political stamp. The leaders were simply tools of the Court. Frequently they were at variance amongst themselves in matters of theology, and their people, too, were dragged into the controversy. To the magistrates it was left to decide such differences unless indeed some dictatorial official forestalled them, as was the case when the Vogt of Herrenberg took it into his own hands to settle a matter of faith. In the struggles between Lutherans and Zwinglians, the highest court of appeal above the town-Councillors and the officials was the Ducal Chancery.

Ulrich himself did not explicitly side either with the Confession of Augsburg or with the "*Confessio Tetrapolitana*," viz. with the more Zwinglian form of faith agreed upon at the Diet of Augsburg by the four South-German townships of Strasburg, Constance, Memmingen and Lindau.

The preachers who assembled in 1537 at the so-called Idols-meeting of Urach, to discuss the question of the veneration of images which had given rise to serious dissensions amongst them, appealed to Ulrich. Blaurer inveighed against the use of images as idolatrous. Brenz declared that their removal in Würtemberg would be tantamount to a condemnation of the Lutheran Church in Saxony and elsewhere where they were permitted. The Court, to which the majority of the theologians appealed, ordered the removal of all images on Jan. 20, 1540. Distressing scenes were witnessed in many places when the images and pictures in the churches, which were not only prized by the people, but were also, many of them, of great artistic value,[2] were broken and torn to pieces in spite of the warning issued by the authorities against their violent destruction. The "*Tetrapolitana*" had already forcibly denounced the use of images.

At Ulm, which so far had refused to accept the "*Tetrapolitana*," the magistrates in 1544 decided to adhere to the Confession of Augsburg and the "*Apologia*." Blaurer, some years before (1541), had justifiably complained of the arbitrary action of the civic authorities and said that every town acted according to its own ideas. But the preachers were frequently so exorbitant in the material demands they made on behalf of themselves and their families that the Town Council of Ulm declared, they behaved as though "each one had the right to receive a full saucepan every day."[3]

[1] Hans Werner to Chancellor Eck, Jan. 14, 1536, Wille, *ibid.*, p. 298.

[2] Bossert, *ibid.*, remarks, p. 333: "*Many* mediæval works of art were preserved."

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

In place of any amendment of the many moral disorders already prevailing, still greater moral corruption became the rule among the people of Würtemberg, as is attested by Myconius the Zwinglian in 1539, and thirty years later by the Chancellor of the University of Tübingen, Jacob Andreæ.

The former declared that the "people are full of impudence and godlessness; of blasphemy, drunkenness, sins of the flesh and wild licentiousness there is no end"[1] Andreæ directly connects with the new faith this growing demoralisation: "A dissolute, Epicurean, bestial life, feeding, swilling, avarice, pride and blasphemy." "We have learnt," so the people said, according to him, "that only through faith in Jesus Christ are we saved, Who by His death has atoned for all our sins; . . . that all the world may see they are not Papists and rely not at all on good works, they perform none. Instead of fasting they gorge and swill day and night, instead of giving alms, they flay the poor." "Everyone admits this cannot go on longer, for things have come to a crisis. Amongst the people there is little fear of God and little or no veracity or faith; all forms of injustice have increased and we have reached the limit."[2]

A General Rescript had to be issued on May 22, 1542, for the whole of Würtemberg, to check "the drunkenness, blasphemy, swearing, gluttony, coarseness and quarrelsomeness rampant in the parishes."[3]

Few bright spots are to be seen in the accounts of the early days of the Reformation in Würtemberg, if we except the lives of one or two blameless ministers. It is no fault of the historian's that there is nothing better to chronicle. Even the Protestant historians of Würtemberg, albeit predisposed to paint the change of religion in bright colours, have to admit this. They seek to explain the facts on the score that the period was one of restless and seething transition, and to throw the blame on earlier times and on the questionable elements among the Catholic clergy from whose ranks most of the preachers were recruited.[4] But though grave responsibility may rest on earlier times, not only here but in the other districts which fell away from the Church, and though those of the clergy who forgot their duty and the honour of their calling may have contributed even more than usual to damage the fair reputation of

[1] In Heyd, "Ulrich Herzog von Würtenberg," 3, p. 89.

[2] The passages are given in greater detail in "Erinnerung nach dem Lauf der Planeten gestellt," Tübingen, 1568, and "Dreizehn Predigten vom Türken," Tübingen, 1569, in Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 2, pp. 376–378.

[3] Bossert, *ibid.*, p. 357.

[4] Thus, e.g. Bossert, *loc. cit.*, and in other studies on Würtemberg Church-History in the 16th century, called forth by Janssen's work.

Protestantism, yet the increase of immorality which has been proved to have endured for a long course of years, brings the historian face to face with a question not lightly to be dismissed : Why did the preaching of the new Evangel, with its supposedly higher standard of religion and morality, especially at the springtide of its existence and in its full vigour, not bring about an improvement, but rather the reverse ?

This question applies, however, equally to other countries which were then torn from the Church, and to the persons principally instrumental in the work.

In Hesse the religious upheaval, as even Protestant contemporaries conceded, also promoted a great decline of morals.

The bad example given by Landgrave Philip tended to increase the evil.[1] A harmful influence was exercised not only by the Landgrave's Court but also by certain preachers, such as Johann Lening,[2] who enjoyed Philip's favour. Elisabeth, Duchess of Rochlitz, the Landgrave's sister, and a zealous patron of the Evangel, like the Prince himself, cherished rather lax views on morality. At first she was indignant at the bigamy, though not on purely moral grounds. The sovereign met her anger with a threat of telling the world what she herself had done during her widowhood. The result was that the Duchess said no more.[3] The Landgrave's Court-preacher, Dionysius Melander, who performed the marriage ceremony with the second wife, had, five years before, laid down his office as preacher and leader of the innovations at Frankfort on the Maine, " having fallen out with his fellows and personally compromised himself by carrying on with his housekeeper." He was a " violent, despotic and, at times, coarse and obscene, popular orator whose personal record was not unblemished."[4]

A Hessian church ordinance of 1539 complains of the moral retrogression : Satan has estranged men from the communion of Christ " not only by means of factions and sects, but also by carnal wantonness and dissolute living."[5] The old Hessian

[1] Cp. above, *passim*. [2] See above, p. 65.
[3] " Briefwechsel Philipps von Hessen," 1, p. 334 f.
[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 315 f. On his marriage, see above, p. 157.
[5] A. L. Richter, " Die evangel. Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts," 1, p. 290.

historian Wigand Lauze writes, in his "Life and deeds of Philip the Magnanimous, Landgrave of Hesse," that, the people have become very savage and uncouth, "as though God had given us His precious Word, and thereby delivered us from the innumerable abominations of Popery and its palpable idolatry, simply that each one might be free to do or leave undone whatever he pleased"; "many evil deeds were beginning to be looked upon by many as no longer sinful or vicious." He accuses "the magistrates, ministers and governors" of corrupting the people by themselves transgressing the "good, Christian regulations" which had been set up, and charges both preachers and hearers with serving Mammon, and with "barefaced extortion," "not to mention other sins and vices."[1]

The Hessian theologians and preachers transferred the responsibility for the abolition of "law and order," for the increase of the "freedom of the flesh within the Evangel" and for the falling away into a "state like that of Sodom and Gomorrha" to the shoulders of the "magistrates and officials."[2] The latter, on the other hand, boldly asserted that the preachers themselves were the cause of the evil, since they led a "wicked, scandalous life, drinking, gambling, practising usury and so forth, and were, some of them, guilty of still worse things, brawling, fighting and wrangling with the people in the taverns and behaving improperly with the women."[3] Bucer himself, Philip's adviser in ecclesiastical matters, wrote sadly to the Landgrave, in 1539, from Marburg: "The people are becoming demoralised and immorality is gaining the upper hand." "Where such contempt prevails for God and the authorities there the devil is omnipotent."[4]

2. At the Centre of the New Faith

If we glance at the Saxon Electorate we shall find the deep despondency frequently displayed by Luther concerning the deplorable moral decadence prevailing there only too well justified.

The downward trend appeared to have set in in earnest and all hope of remedying affairs seemed lost.[5]

The Court and those in authority not only did little to check the evil but, by their example, even tended to promote many disorders. The Elector, Johann Frederick "the Magnanimous" (1532–1547), was addicted to drink. The banquets which he

[1] "Leben," etc. ("Zeitschr. des Vereins für hess. Gesch.," Suppl. 2, Bd. 1 und 2), 1, p. 379 ff.

[2] Neudecker, "Urkunden aus der Reformationszeit," p. 684 ff. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Eng. Trans.), 6, pp. 88–91.

[3] Hassencamp, "Hess. KG. im Zeitalter der Reformation," 2, p. 613 f. Janssen, *ibid.*

[4] "Briefwechsel Philipps," 1, p. 121 f. Janssen, *ibid.*

[5] Cp. above, *passim*, and vol. iii., p. 324; vol. ii., pp. 123 ff., 218 ff. 344, 349 f.

gave to his friends—in which wine was indulged in to an extent unusual even in those days when men were accustomed to heavy drinking—became a byword. Luther himself came to speak strongly on his excessive drinking. "His only faults," he laments in the Table-Talk, "are his drinking and routing too much with his companions."[1] "He has all the virtues—but just fancy him swilling like that!"[2] Yet Luther has an excuse ready: "He is a stout man and can stand a deep draught; what he must needs drink would make another man dead drunk."[3] "Unfortunately not only our Court here but the whole of Germany is plagued with this vice of drunkenness. It is a bad old custom in the German lands which has gone on growing and will continue to grow. Henry, Duke of [Brunswick] Wolfenbüttel calls our Elector a drunkard and very Nabal with whom Abigail could not speak until he had slept off his carouse."[4] We have the Elector's own comment on this in a letter to Chancellor Brück: "If the Brunswick fellow writes that we are a drunken Nabal and Benadad, we cannot entirely deny that we sometimes follow the German custom"; at any rate the Brunswicker was not the man to find fault, for he was an even harder drinker.[5]

Johann Frederick was accused by Philip of Hesse of the grossest immorality. This happened when the former refused to defend Philip's bigamy and when his Superintendent, Justus Menius, who was given to lauding the Elector's virtues, showed an inclination to protest publicly against the Landgrave's bigamy. This led Philip to write this warning to his theologian Bucer: "If those saintly folk, Justus Menius and his crew, amuse themselves by writing against us, they shall have their answer. And we shall not leave hidden under a bushel how this most august and quite sinless Elector, once, under our roof at Cassel, and again, at the time of the first Diet of Spires, committed the crime of sodomy."[6]

A. Hausrath remarks concerning this in his "Luthers Leben": That Philip was lying "can hardly be taken for granted";[7] G.

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden" (Kroker), p. 173. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 373. [4] Hausrath, 2, p. 391.
[5] Letter of Feb. 9, 1541. See G. Mentz, "Johann Friedrich der Grossmütige," 3, Jena, 1908, p. 344, according to certain "archives."—Steinhausen ("Kulturgesch. der Deutschen," p. 508), calls the Elector Johann Frederick quite simply a "drunkard." He points out that Anna of Saxony died of drink and that the Saxons, even in the 15th century, were noted for their drinking habits.
[6] Letter of Jan. 3, 1541, "Briefwechsel Philipps," ed. Lenz, 1, p. 302.
[7] "Luthers Leben," 2, Berlin, 1904, p. 391.

Mentz, likewise, in his recent work, "Joh. Friedrich der Grossmütige,"[1] says: "It is difficult simply to ignore the Landgrave's statement, but we do not know whether the allusion may not be to some sin committed in youth." Here belongs also the passage in Philip of Hesse's letter to Luther of July 27, 1540 (above, p. 60), where he calls the Elector to bear witness that he (the Landgrave) had done "the worst." The Biblical expression "*peccatum pessimum*" stood for sodomy. Further charges of a similar nature were even more explicitly laid at the door of Johann Frederick. A Catholic, relating the proceedings in Brunswick at the close of the conquest of that country by the Protestant troops in 1542, speaks of "vices and outrages against nature then indulged in by the Elector at the Castle as is commonly reported and concerning which there is much talk among the Court people."[2] Duke Henry of Brunswick in a tract of 1544 referred not only to the Elector's sanction of the Landgrave's bigamy, in return for which he was spared by the latter, but also to the "many other pranks which might be circumstantially proved against them and which deserved more severe punishment" than that of the sword.[3] The "more severe punishment" means burning at the stake, which was the penalty decreed by the laws of the Empire for sodomy, whereas polygamy and adultery were simply punished by decapitation. Both sovereigns in their reply flatly denied the charge, but, evidently, they clearly understood its nature; they had never been guilty, they said, of "shameful, dishonourable pranks deserving of death by fire."[4]

Whatever the truth may be concerning this particular charge which involves them both,[5] both Landgrave and Elector certainly left behind them so bad a record that Adolf Hausrath could say: The pair (but the Landgrave even more than the Elector) did their best "to make mockery of the claim of the Evangelicals that their Evangel would revive the morality of the German nation." He instances in particular the bigamy, "which put any belief in the reality of their piety to a severe test and prepared the way for a great moral defeat of Luther's cause."[6]

In the matter of the bigamy attempts were made to exculpate the Elector Johann Frederick by alleging, that

[1] 3 Teil, Jena, 1909, p. 343 f.

[2] Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Eng. Trans.), 6, p. 213.

[3] Hortleder, "Von den Ursachen des Teutschen Kriegs Karls V. wider die Schmalkaldische," 1, Gotha, 1645, p. 1837.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 1869 f.

[5] N. Paulus, who examined the matter more closely in the "Hist. Jahrb.," 30, 1909, p. 154, comes to the conclusion that Mentz in his Life of Johann Frederick has not laid sufficient weight on the testimony of the witnesses.

[6] "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 391 f.

he regarded the Landgrave's step not as a real new marriage but as mere concubinage. The fact is, however, he was sufficiently well informed by Bucer in Dec. 1539, i.e. from the very beginning, learnt further details two months later from the Landgrave's own lips, and declared himself "satisfied with everything." When, later, the Elector began to take an unfavourable view of the business, Philip wrote to Bucer (July 24, 1540), pointing out that he had nevertheless sent his representative to the wedding. It is, however, true that the Elector had all along been against any making public of so compromising an affair and had backed up his theologians when they urged the Landgrave to deny it.[1]

There is no more ground for crediting Johann Frederick with "strictness of morals" than for saying that the Elector Frederick the Wise (1486–1525), under whose reign Lutheranism took root in the land, was upright and truthful in his dealings with the Pope and the Empire.

The diplomatic artifices by which the latter protected Luther whilst pretending not to do so, the dissembling and double-dealing of his policy throws a slur on the memory of one who was a powerful patron of Lutheranism. Even in Köstlin-Kawerau[2] we find his behaviour characterised as "one long subterfuge, seeing, that, whilst giving Luther a free hand, he persisted in making out that Luther's cause was not his"; his declaration, that "it did not become him as a layman to decide in such a controversy," is rightly branded as misleading.

The Protestant Pietists were loudest in their complaints. In his "Kirchenhistorie," Gottfried Arnold, who was one of them, blamed, in 1699, this Elector for the "cunning and the political intrigues" of which he was suspected; he is angry that this so undevout promoter of Lutheranism should have written to Duke George, his cousin, "that he never undertook nor ever would undertake to defend Luther's sermons or his controversial writings," and that he should have sent to his minister at Rome the following instructions, simply to pacify the Pope: "It did not become him as a secular Prince to judge of these matters, and he left Luther to answer for everything at his own

[1] Cp. above, *passim*.
[2] Vol. i., p. 601.

risk."[1] The same historian also points out with dissatisfaction that the Elector Frederick, "though always unmarried, had, by a certain female, two sons called Frederick and Sebastian. How he explained this to his spiritual directors is nowhere recorded."[2] The "female" in question was Anna Weller, by whom he had, besides these two sons, also a daughter.[3]

Against his brother and successor, Johann, surnamed the Constant (1525–1532), Luther's friends brought forward no such complaints, but merely reproached him with letting things take their course. Arnold instances a statement of Melanchthon's according to which this good Lutheran Prince "had been very negligent in examining this thing and that," so that grave disorders now called for a remedy. Luther, too, whilst praising the Elector's good qualities, declares, that "he was far too indulgent."[4] "I interfere with no one," was his favourite saying, "but merely trust more in God's Word than in man." The protests of the Emperor and the representations of the Catholics, politics and threats of war left him quite unmoved, whence his title of "the Constant"; "he was just the right man for Luther," says Hausrath,[5] "for the latter did not like to see the gentlemen of the Saxon Chancery, Brück, Beyer, Planitz and the rest, interfering and urging considerations of European politics. 'Our dear old father, the Elector,' Luther said of him in 1530, 'has broad shoulders, and must now bear everything.'"

The favour of these Princes caused Luther frequently to overstep the bounds of courtesy in his behaviour towards them. Julius Boehmer, who is sorry for this, in the Introduction to his selection of Luther's works remarks, that he was guilty of "want of respect, nay, of rudeness, towards the Elector Frederick and his successor Johann."[6] Of Luther's relations with Johann Frederick, Hausrath says: "It is by no means certain that the Duke's [Henry of Brunswick's] opinion [viz. that Luther used to speak of his own Elector as Hans Wurst (i.e. Jack Pudding)] was without foundation; in any case, it was not far from the mark. With his eternal plans and his narrow-minded obstinacy,

[1] Frankfurt, 1699, 2, p. 44. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] "Allg. deutsche Biographie," 7, p. 781 (Flathe).
[4] Hausrath, *loc. cit.*, 2, p. 67. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[6] "Martin Luthers Werke für das deutsche Volk," 1907, p. xiii.

Luther's corpulent master was a thorn in the side of the aged Reformer. . . . 'He works like a donkey,' Luther once said of him, and, unfortunately, this was perfectly true."[1]

In his will, dated 1537, Luther addressed the following words of consolation to the princely patrons and promoters of his work, the Landgrave and the Elector Johann Frederick: It was true they were not quite stainless, but the Papists were even worse; they had indeed trespassed on the rights and possessions of others, but this was of no great consequence; they must continue to work for the Evangel, though in what way he would not presume to dictate to them.[2]—Melanchthon, who was so often distressed at the way the Princes behaved on the pretext of defending the Evangel, complains that "the sophistry and wickedness of our Princes are bringing the Empire to ruin," in which "bitter cry," writes a Protestant historian, "he sums up the result of his own unhappy experiences."[3]

From the accounts of the Visitations in the Electorate we learn more details of the condition of morality, law and order in this the focus of the new Evangel. The proximity and influence of Luther and of his best and most faithful preachers did not constitute any bulwark against the growing corruption of morals, which clear-sighted men indeed attributed mainly to the new doctrines on good works, on faith alone and on Evangelical freedom.

In the protocols of the first Visitation (1527–1529) we read: The greater number of those entrusted with a cure of souls, are "in an evil case"; reckless marriages are frequent amongst the

[1] Hausrath, *ibid.*, 2, p. 390.

[2] "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 209, from the original at Weimar, written by Bugenhagen: "*Utcunque sint in quibusdam peccatores et non in omnibus puri, calumniantibus hoc etiam vel forte accusantibus adversariis, tamen confidant de Domini bonitate*," etc. And before this, concerning the "*adversariorum clamores 'Rapiunt bona ecclesiastica,'*" etc., they were to comfort themselves, "*quia non sic rapiunt, quemadmodum quidam alii; video enim eos per hæc bona curare quæ sunt religionis. Si quid præterea ipsis ex talibus bonis accedit, quis potius ea susciperet? Principum sunt talia, non nebulonum papistarum.*" The general spoliation of church property disturbed his mind, as we can see, but he overcomes his scruples, and persuades himself that their action, like his own, was really directed against Antichrist: "*Iube meis verbis, ut faciant in Deo confidenter pro causa evangelii quicquid Spiritus sanctus suggesserit; non præscribo eis modum. Misericors Deus confortet eos, ut mancant in ista sana doctrina et gratias agant, quod sunt liberati ab Antichristo.*"

[3] Ellinger, "Melanchthon," p. 588.

preachers; complaints were lodged with the Electoral Visitors concerning the preacher at Lucka who "had three wives living."[1] At a later Visitation a preacher was discovered to have had six children by two sisters. Many of the preachers had wives whom they had stolen from husbands still living. The account of the people whether in town or country was not much more reassuring; many localities had earned themselves a bad repute for blasphemy and general adultery. In many places the people were declared to be so wicked that only "the hangman and the jailer would be of any avail." Besides this, the parsonages were in a wretched state. "The foundations had fallen in, or, in many instances, had been seized by the nobles, the lands and meadows belonging to the parsonages had been sold by the parish-councils, and the money from the sale of chalices and monstrances spent on drink. The educational system was so completely ruined that in the Wittenberg district, for instance, in which there were 145 town and country livings with hundreds of chapels of ease, only 21 schools remained.

As early as 1527 Melanchthon had viewed with profound dismay the "serious ruin and decay that menaces everything good," which, he says, was clearly perceived at Wittenberg. "You see," he writes, "how greatly men hate one another, how great is the contempt for all uprightness, how great the ignorance of those who stand at the head of the churches, and above all how forgetful the rulers are of God." And again, in 1528: "No one hates the Evangel more bitterly than those who like to be considered ours." "We see," he laments in the same year, "how greatly the people hate us."[2]

His friend Justus Jonas, who was acquainted with the conditions in the Saxon Electorate from long personal experience, wrote in 1530: "Those who call themselves Evangelical are becoming utterly depraved, and not only is there no longer any fear of God among them but there is no respect for outward appearances either; they are weary of and disgusted with sermons, they despise their pastors and preachers and treat them like the dirt and dust of the streets." "And, besides all this, the common people are becoming utterly shameless, insolent and ruffianly, as if the Evangel had only been sent to give lewd fellows liberty and scope for the practice of all their vices."[3]

The next Visitation, held seven years later, only confirmed the growth of the evil. In the Wittenberg district in particular complaints were raised concerning "the increase in godless

[1] This ex-priest, Michael Kramer, first took a wife at Cunitz, and when she began to lead a bad life, married a second at Dommitzsch "on the strength of an advice secured." On account of matrimonial squabbles he married a third time, after obtaining advice from Luther through the magistrates. C. A. Burkhardt, "Briefwechsel Luthers," p. 87; cp. his "Gesch. d. sächs. Kirchen- und Schulvisitationen," p. 48.

[2] "Corp. ref.," 1, pp. 888, 913, 982. Döllinger, "Reformation," 1, pp. 362 f., 369. Above, vol. iii., p. 324.

[3] Quoted in Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Eng. Trans.), 5, p. 100 f.

living, the prevailing contempt and blasphemy of the Word of God, the complete neglect of the Supper and the general flippant and irreverent behaviour during Divine service."[1]

Of a later period, when the fruits of the change of religion had still further ripened, Melanchthon's friend Camerarius says: "Mankind have now attained the goal of their desires—boundless liberty to think and act exactly as they please. Reason, moderation, law, morality and duty have lost all value, there is no reverence for contemporaries and no respect for posterity."[2]

The Elector Augustus of Saxony goes more into particulars when he writes: "A disgraceful custom has become established in our villages. The peasants at the high festivals, such as Christmas and Whitsuntide, begin their drinking-bouts on the eve of the festival and prolong them throughout the night, and the next day they either sleep through the morning or else come drunk to church and snore and grunt like pigs during the whole service." He reproves the custom of making use of the churches as wine-cellars, the contempt displayed for the preachers, the scoffing at sacred rites and the "frequent blasphemy and cursing." "Murder and abominable lasciviousness" were the consequences of such contempt for religion. But any improvement was not to be looked for seeing that there were hardly any schools remaining, and the cure of souls was left principally in the charge of ministers such as the Elector proceeds to describe. The nobles and the other feudal lords, he says, "appoint everywhere to the ministry ignorant, destitute artisans, or else rig out their scribes, outriders or grooms as priests and set them in the livings so as to have them all the more under their thumb."[3]

The state of things in Saxony provided the Landgrave with a serviceable weapon against Luther when the latter showed an inclination to repudiate the bigamy, or to say he had merely "acted the fool" in sanctioning it. The passage has been quoted above (p. 56), where the Landgrave exhorted him to pay less attention to the world's opinion, but rather to set himself and all the preachers in the Saxon Electorate to the task of checking the "vices of adultery, usury and drunkenness which were no longer regarded as sins, and that, not merely by writings and sermons, but by earnest admonition and by means of the ban."

It is true that the conditions which accompanied the introduction of his new system were a trial to Luther, which he sought to remedy. The Landgrave could not reproach him with actual indifference. Not merely by "writings and sermons," but also by "earnest admonition" and even by re-introducing the "ban of

[1] From Burkhardt, *ibid.* Janssen, *ibid.*

[2] Janssen, *ibid.*, 6, p. 521, given as Melanchthon's words.

[3] A. L. Richter, "Die evangel. Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrh.," 2, pp. 181, 192 f. Janssen, *ibid.*, p. 523. W. Schmidt ("Kirchen- und Schulvisitationen im sächs. Kurkreis von 1555," 1907, Hft. 1–2, "Schriften des Vereins für RG.," No. 90) fancies he can discern a certain improvement in ecclesiastical life and in the school system about the year 1555.

the Church " he strove to check the rising tide of moral evil. But the evil was the stronger of the two, and the causes, for which he himself was responsible, lay too deep. We have an example of the way in which he frequently sought to curb the mischief, in his quarrel with Hans Metzsch, the depraved Commandant of Wittenberg, whom he excluded from the Supper.[1]

He sums up his grievances against the state of things in the Electorate and at Wittenberg in a letter to Johann Mantel, in which he calls Wittenberg a new Sodom. He writes to this preacher (Nov. 10, 1539): " Together with Lot (2 Peter ii. 8), you and other pious Christians, I, too, am tormented, plagued and martyred in this awful Sodom by shameful ingratitude and horrible contempt of the Divine Word of our beloved Saviour, when I see how Satan seizes upon and takes possession of the hearts of those who think themselves the first and most important in the kingdom of Christ and of God ; beyond this I am tempted and plagued with interior anxiety and distress." He then goes on to console his friend, who was also troubled with melancholy and the fear of death, by a sympathetic reference to the death of Christ. He then admits again of himself that he was " distressed and greatly plagued " and " compassed by more than one kind of death in this miserable, lamentable age, where there is nothing but ingratitude, and where every kind of wickedness gains the upper hand. . . . Wait for the Lord with patience, for He is now at hand and will not delay to come. Amen."[2]

3. Luther's Attempts to Explain the Decline in Morals

Luther quite candidly admitted the distressing state of things described above without in the least glossing it over, which indeed he could not well have done ; in fact, his own statements give us an even clearer insight into the seamy side of life in his day. He speaks of the growing disorders with pain and vexation ; the more so since he could not but see that they were being fomented by his doctrine of justification by faith alone.

" This preaching," he says, " ought by rights to be accepted and listened to with great joy, and everyone ought to improve himself thereby and become more pious. But, unfortunately, the reverse is now the case and the longer it endures the worse the world becomes ; this is [the work of] the devil himself, for now we see the people becoming more infamous, more avaricious, more unmerciful, more unchaste and in every way worse than they were under Popery."[3]

The Evangelicals now are not merely worse, but " seven times worse than before," so he complains as early as 1529. " For after having heard the Evangel we still continue to steal, lie, cheat, feed and swill and to practise every vice. Now that one devil

[1] For the way Metzsch was dealt with, see Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," pp. 163, 167. " Briefe," 6, p. 213 f. Below, vol. v., xxx., 3.

[2] " Briefe," 5, p. 223 f.

[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 1^2, p. 14, " Hauspostille,"

[that of Popery] has been driven out seven others worse than it have entered into us, as may be seen from the way the Princes, lords, nobles, burghers and peasants behave, who have lost all sense of fear, and regard not God and His menaces."[1]

From his writings a long, dreary list of sins might be compiled, of which each of the classes here mentioned had been guilty. In the last ten years of his life such lamentations give the tone to most of what he wrote.

"The nobles scrape money together, rob and plunder"; "like so many devils they grind the poor churches, the pastors and the preachers." "The burghers and peasants do nothing but hoard, are usurers and cheats and behave defiantly and wantonly without any fear of punishment, so that it cries to heaven for vengeance and the earth can endure it no longer." "On all hands and wherever we turn we see nothing in all classes but a deluge of dreadful ingratitude for the beloved Evangel."[2]

"Nowadays the Gospel is preached, and whoever chooses can hear it . . . but burghers, peasants and nobles all scorn their ministers and preachers."[3]

"I have often said that a plague must fall upon Germany; the Princes and gentry deserve that our Lord God should play them a trick; there will be such bloodshed that no one will know his own home."[4] "Now that all this [the Evangel] is preached rightly and plainly, people cannot despise it enough. In old days monasteries and churches were built with no regard for cost, now people won't even repair a hole in the roof that the minister may lie dry; of their contempt I say nothing, it is enough to move one to tears to witness such scorn. Hence I say: Take care, you are young; it may be you will live to see and experience the coming misfortune that will break over Germany. For a storm will burst over Germany, and that without fail. . . . I do not mind so much the peasants' avarice and the fornication and immorality now on the increase everywhere, as the contempt for the Evangel. . . . That peasants, burghers and nobles thus contemn the Word of God will be their undoing."[5]

To the question whence the moral decline amongst the adherents of the new teaching came, Luther was wont to give various answers. Their difference and his occasional self-contradictions show how his consciousness of the disorders and the complaints they drew from every side drive him into a corner.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 28, p. 763; Erl. ed., 36, p. 411, conclusion of the "Auslegung über etliche Kapitel des fünften Buches Mosis," 1529.
[2] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 9^2, p. 330 f., "Kirchenpostille."
[3] *Ibid.*, 4^2, p. 4, "Hauspostille."
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

The most correct explanation was, of course, that the mischief was due to the nature of his teaching on faith and good works; to this, involuntarily, he comes back often enough.

"That we are now so lazy and cold in the performance of good works," he says, in a recently published sermon of 1528, "is due to our no longer regarding them as a means of justification. For when we still hoped to be justified by our works our zeal for doing good was a marvel. One sought to excel the other in uprightness and piety. Were the old teaching to be revived to-day and our works made contributory to righteousness, we should be readier and more willing to do what is good. Of this there is, however, no prospect and thus, when it is a question of serving our neighbour and praising God by means of good works, we are sluggish and not disposed to do anything."[1] "The surer we are of the righteousness which Christ has won for us, the colder and idler we are in teaching the Word, in prayer, in good works and in enduring misfortune."[2]

"We teach," he continues, "that we attain to God's grace without any work on our part. Hence it comes that we are so listless in doing good. When, once upon a time, we believed that God rewarded our works, I ran to the monastery, and you gave ten gulden towards building a church. Men then were glad to do something through their works and to be their own '*Justus et Salvator*' (Zach. ix., 9)." Now, when asked to give, everybody protests he is poor and a beggar, and says there is no obligation of giving or of performing good works. "We have become worse than formerly and are losing our old righteousness. Moreover, avarice is increasing everywhere."[3]

Though here Luther finds the reason of the neglect of good works so clearly in his own teaching, yet on other occasions, for instance, in a sermon of 1532, he grows angry when his doctrine is made responsible for the mischief.

Only "clamourers," so he says, could press such a charge. Yet, at the same time, he fully admits the decline: "I own, and others doubtless do the same, that there is not now such earnestness in the Gospel as formerly under the monks and priests when so many foundations were made, when there was so much building and no one was so poor as not to be able to give. But now there is not a town willing to support a preacher, there is nothing but plundering and thieving among the people and no one can prevent it. Whence comes this shameful plague? The clamourers answer, 'from the teaching that we must not build upon or trust in works.' But it is the devil himself who sets down such an effect to pure and wholesome doctrine, whereas it is

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 443.
[2] "Comment. in ep. ad Galatas," 2, p. 351.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 443, according to another set of notes of the sermon quoted in n. 1.

in reality due to his own and the people's malice who ill-use such doctrines, and to our old Adam. . . . We are, all unawares, becoming lazy, careless and remiss."[1]

"The devil's malice!" This is another explanation to which Luther and others not unfrequently had recourse. The devil could do such extraordinary and apparently contradictory things! He could even teach men to "pray fervently." In the Table-Talk, for instance, when asked by his wife why it was, that, whereas in Popery "we prayed so diligently and frequently, we are now so cold and pray so seldom," Luther put it down to the devil. "The devil made us fervent," he says; "he ever urges on his servants, but the Holy Ghost teaches and exhorts us how to pray aright; yet we are so tepid and slothful in prayer that nothing comes of it."[2] Thus it might well be the devil who was answerable for the misuse of the Evangel.

On another occasion, in order to counteract the bad impression made on his contemporaries by the fruits of his preaching, he says: "Our morals only look so bad on account of the sanctity of the Evangel; in Catholic times they stood very low and many vices prevailed, but all this was unperceived amidst the general darkness which shrouded doctrine and the moral standards which then held; now, on the other hand, our eyes have been opened by a purer faith and even small abuses are seen in their true colours." His words on this subject will be given below.

It even seemed to Luther that the decay of almsgiving and the parsimony displayed towards the churches and the preachers proved the truth of the Evangel ("*signum est, verum esse evangelium nostrum*"), for, so he teaches in a sermon preached at Wittenberg in 1527, "the devil is the Prince of this world and all its riches, as we learn from the story of Christ's Temptation. He is now defending his kingdom from the Evangel which has risen up against him. He does not now allow us so many possessions and gifts as he formerly did to those who served him (i.e. the Papists), for their Masses, Vigils, etc.; nay, he robs us of everything and spends it on himself. Formerly we supported many hundred monks and now we cannot raise the needful for one Evangelical preacher, a sign that our Evangel is the

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 353.
[2] *Ibid.*, 59, p. 6. Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 95.

true one and that the Pope's empire was the devil's own, where he bestowed gifts on his followers with open hands and incited them to luxury, avarice, fornication and gluttony. And their teaching was in conformity therewith, for they urged those works which pleased them."[1]

The observer may well marvel at such strange trains of thought. Luther's doctrine has become to him like a pole-star around which the whole firmament must revolve. Experience and logic alike must perforce be moulded at his pleasure to suit the idea which dominates him.

It was impossible to suppress the inexorable question put by his opponents, and the faint-hearted doubts of many of his own followers: Since our Saviour taught: "By their fruits shall you know them," how can you be a Divinely sent teacher if these are the moral effects of your new Evangel? And yet Luther, to the very close of his career, in tones ever more confident, insists on his higher, nay, Divine, calling, and on his election to "reveal" hidden doctrines of faith, strange to say, those very doctrines to which he, like others too, attributed the decline.

Concerning his Divine mission he had not hesitated to say in so many words: Unless God calls a man to do a work no one who does not wish to be a fool may venture to undertake it; "for a certain Divine call and not a mere whim" is essential to every good work.[2] Hence he frequently sees in success the best test of a good work. In his own case, however, he could point only to one great result, and that a negative one, viz. the harm done to Popery; the Papacy had been no match for him and had failed to check the apostasy. The Papists' undertaking, such is his proof, is not a success; it goes sideways "after the fashion of the crab." "Even for those who had a sure Divine vocation it was difficult to undertake and carry through anything good, though God was with them and assisted them; what then could those silly fools, who wished to undertake it without being called, expect to do?" "But I, Dr. Martin, was called and compelled to become a Doctor. . . . Thus I was obliged to accept the office of a Doctor. Hence, owing to my work, "this which you see

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 455.

[2] *Ibid.*, 30, 3, p. 386; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 86, "Auff das vermeint Edict," 1531.

has befallen the Papacy, and worse things are yet in store for it." To those who still refused to acknowledge Luther's call to teach he addresses a sort of command : St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiv., 30, commanded all, even superiors, to be silent and obey "when some other than the chief teacher receives a revelation." "The work that Luther undertakes," "the great work of the Reformation," he assures all, was given not to the other side, but to him alone.[1]—It is no wonder that his gainsayers and the doubters on his own side refused to be convinced by such arguments and appeals to the work of destruction accomplished, but continued to harp on the words : "By their fruits you shall know them," which text they took literally, viz. as referring to actual fruits of moral improvement.

The "great work of the Reformation," i.e. of real reform, to which Luther appeals—unless he was prepared to regard it as consisting solely in the damage done to the Roman Church—surely demanded that, at least at Wittenberg and in Luther's immediate sphere, some definite fruits in the shape of real moral amelioration should be apparent. Yet it was precisely of Wittenberg and his own surroundings that Luther complained so loudly. The increase of every kind of disorder caused him to write to George of Anhalt : "We live in Sodom and Babylon, or rather must die there ; the good men, our Lots and Daniels, whom we so urgently need now that things are daily becoming worse, are snatched from us by death."[2] So bad were matters that Luther was at last driven to flee from Wittenberg. The sight of the immorality, the vexation and the complaints to which he was exposed became too much for him ; perhaps Wittenberg would catch the "Beggars' dance, or Beelzebub's dance," he wrote ; "at any rate get us gone from this Sodom."[3]

According to his letters, the Wittenberg authorities did not interfere even in the case of the gravest disorders, but allowed themselves to be "playthings of the devils" ; they looked on whilst the students "were ruined by bad women," and "though half the town is guilty of adultery, usury, theft and cheating,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., p. 385 ff. = 86 f.

[2] March 9, 1545, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 722, letter called forth by the death of George Held Forchheim, to whom the Prince was much attached.

[3] To Catherine Bora, end of July, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 753.

no one tries to put the law in force. They all simply smile, wink at it and do the same themselves. The world is a troublesome thing."[1] "The hoiden-folk have grown bold," he writes to the Elector, "they pursue the young fellows into their very rooms and chambers, freely offering them their love; and I hear that many parents are recalling their children home because, they say, when they send their children to us to study we hang women about their necks."[2] He is aghast at the thought that the "town and the school" should have heard God's Word so often and so long and yet, "instead of growing better, become worse as time goes on." He fears that at his end he may hear, "that things were never worse than now," and sees Wittenberg threatened with the curse of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capharnaum."[3]

In point of fact he did preach a sermon to the Wittenbergers in which, like a prophet, he predicts the judgments of heaven.[4]

In another sermon he angrily acquaints them with his determination: "What am I to do with you Wittenbergers? I am not going to preach to you any longer of Christ's Kingdom, seeing that you will not accept it. You are thieves, robbers and men of no mercy. I shall have to preach you the 'Sachsenspiegel.'" They refuse, he says, to give anything to clergy, church or schools. "Are you still ignorant, you unthankful beasts ('*ingratæ bestiæ*') of what they do for you?" He concludes: They must make up their minds to provide the needful, "otherwise I shall abandon the pulpit."[5]

"Later you will find my prophecy fulfilled," he cried on one occasion after having foretold "woes"; "then you will long for one of those exhortations of Martin Luther."[6]

His Table-Talk bears, if possible, even stronger witness than his letters and sermons to the conditions at Wittenberg, for there he freely lets himself go. Some of the things he says of the town and neighbourhood, found in the authentic notes of docile pupils, such as Mathesius, Lauterbach and Schlagınhaufen, are worth consideration.

We hear from Lauterbach not only that Hans Metzsch, the town Commandant whom Luther had "excommunicated," continued to persecute the good at Wittenberg "with satanic malice" and to "boast of his wickedness,"[7] but that in the same year Luther had to complain of other men of influence and standing in the town who injured the Evangel by their example. "So great is the godlessness of those of rank that one was not ashamed to boast of having begotten forty-three children in a single year; another asked whether he might not take 40 per cent interest *per annum.*" In the same year Luther was obliged to exclude from the Sacrament another notorious, highly-placed usurer.[8]

[1] To Justus Jonas, June 18, 1543, "Briefe," 5, p. 570.
[2] On Jan. 22, 1544, "Briefe," 5, p. 615.
[3] "Vermahnung," Feb. or Nov., 1542, "Briefe," 6, p. 302.
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 2, p. 80 ff.; Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 23 ff.
[5] *Ibid.*, 27, p. 408 f., in the newly published sermons of 1528.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 418 f. [7] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 167.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

"The soil of Wittenberg is bad," he declared, speaking from sad experience; "even were good, honest people sown here the crop would be one of coarse Saxons."[1]

"The Gospel at Wittenberg," he once said poetically, if we may trust Mathesius, "is like rain that falls on water, i.e. it has no effect. The good catch the law and the wicked the Gospel."[2]

"I have often wondered," he said in 1532, according to Schlaginhaufen, "why Our Lord God sent His Word to this unfaithful world of Wittenberg: I believe that He sent it to Jerusalem, Wittenberg and such-like places that He might, at the Last Day, be able to reprove their ingratitude." And again, "My opinion is that God will punish severely the ingratitude shown to His Word; for there is not a man of position or a peasant who does not stamp on the ministers; but the service of the Word must remain; even the Turk has his ministers, otherwise he could not maintain his rule."[3]

Luther's Evangel had made "law and command" to retreat into the background as compared with the liberty of the children of God; the penalties he devised, e.g. his exclusion of persons from the reception of the Sacrament, proved ineffectual. He would willingly have made use of excommunication if only "there had been people who would let themselves be excommunicated." "The Pope's ban which kept the people in check," he says, "has been abolished, and it would be a difficult task to re-establish law and command."[4]

"No, I should not like to endure this life for another forty years," so he told his friends on June 11, 1539, "even were God to turn it into a Paradise for me. I would rather hire an executioner to chop off my head; the world is so bad that all are turning into devils, so that they could wish one nothing better than a happy death-bed, and then away!"[5] "The dear, holy Evangel of Christ, that great and precious treasure, we account as insignificant, as if it were a verse from Terence or Virgil."[6]

He found such disdain of his teaching even in his own household and family. This it was which caused him, in 1532, to preach a course of sermons to his family circle on Sundays. No head of a family, least of all here, could connive at any "contempt of the Word." To the question of Dr. Jonas as to the wherefore of these private addresses, he replied: "I see and know that the Word of God is as much neglected in my house as in the Church."[7]

There was no more hope for the world; nothing remains "unspoiled and incorrupt" although, "now, God's Word is revealed," yet "it is despised, spurned, corrupted, mocked at and persecuted," even by the adherents of his teaching.[8]

Luther made Mathesius the recipient of some of his confidences,

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," 179.
[2] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 402.
[3] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 139.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 138.
[5] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 185.
[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 323 (Table-Talk).
[7] "Colloq.," ed. Rebenstock, 2, p. 19.
[8] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 95 f. (Table-Talk).

as the latter relates in his sermons ; on account of the scandals among the preachers of the neighbourhood he was forced and urged by his own people to appeal to the Elector to erect a jail "into which such wild and turbulent folk might be clapped." "Satan causes great scandals amongst the patrons and hearers of the new doctrine," says Mathesius. The common people have become rough and self-confident and have begun to regard the ministers as worthless. "Verily," he exclaims, "the soul of this pious old gentleman was sadly tormented day by day by the unrighteous deeds he was obliged to witness, like pious Lot in Sodom."[1]

With a deep sigh, as we read in Lauterbach's Notes, Luther pointed to the calamities which were about to overtake the world ; it was so perverse and incorrigible that discipline or admonition would be of no avail. Already there was the greatest consternation throughout the world on account of the revelation of the Word. "It is cracking and I hope it will soon burst," and the Last Day arrive for which we are waiting. For all vices have now become habitual and people will not bear reproof. His only comfort was the progress made by studies at Wittenberg, and in some other places now thrown open to the Evangel.[2]

But how were the future preachers now growing up there to improve matters ? This he must well have asked himself when declaring, "with sobs," as Lauterbach relates, that "preachers were treated in most godless and ungrateful fashion." The churches will soon be left without preachers and ministers ; we shall shortly experience this misfortune in the churches ; there will be a dearth not only of learned men but even of men of the commonest sort. Oh, that our young men would study more diligently and devote themselves to theology."[3]

In view of the above it cannot surprise us that Luther gradually became a victim to habitual discouragement and melancholy, particularly towards the end of his life. Proofs of the depression from which he suffered during the latter years of his life will be brought forward in a later volume. Such fits of depression were, however, in those days more than usually common everywhere.

4. A Malady of the Age : Doubts and Melancholy

One of the phenomena which accompanied the religious revulsion and which it is impossible to pass over, was, as contemporary writers relate, the sadness, discontent and depression, in a word "melancholy," so widespread under the new Evangel even amongst its zealous promoters.

[1] "Historien," p. 136′. Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 126 and *ibid.*, Introduction, p. 72 ; Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 13. See above, p. 210.

[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 70, Khummer. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

Melanchthon, one of Luther's most intimate friends, furnished on many occasions of his life a sad spectacle of interior dejection. Of a weaker and more timid mental build than Luther, he appeared at times ready to succumb under the weight of faint-heartedness and scruples, doubts and self-reproaches. (Cp. vol. iii., p. 363 ff.) We may recall how his anxieties, caused by the scandal subsequent on his sanctioning of Philip's bigamy, almost cost him his life. So many are the records he left behind of discouragement and despondency that his death must appear in the light of a welcome deliverance. Luther sought again and again to revive in him the waning consciousness of the Divine character of their work. It is just in these letters of Luther to Melanchthon that we find him most emphatic in his assertion that their common mission is from God. It was to Melanchthon, that, next to himself, Luther applied the words already quoted, spoken to comfort a dejected pupil: "There must be some in the Church as ready to slap Satan as we three; but not all are able or willing to endure this."[1]

Spalatin, who has so frequently been referred to as Luther's go-between at the Electoral Court, and who afterwards became pastor of Altenburg, towards the end of his life fell into incurable despondency.[2] Justus Jonas, likewise, was for a considerable time a prey to melancholy.[3] Hieronymus Weller, one of Luther's best friends, confessed to having suffered at times such violent doubts and fears as would have driven a heathen to commit suicide.[4] The preachers George Mohr [5] and Nicholas Hausmann (a very intimate friend of Luther's[6]) had to endure dreadful pangs of soul; the same was the case with Johann Beltzius, Pastor

[1] Above, vol. iii., p. 410.

[2] G. Wagner, "Georg Spalatin," Altenburg, 1830, p. 105 f. Cp. Luther's letter to Spalatin, quoted in vol. iii., p. 197, n. 1, where he tells him: "*Tristitia occidet te*"; by his (Luther's) mouth Christ had raised up Melanchthon from a similar state induced by the "*spiritus tristitiæ*"; such continuous sorrow over sin was an even greater sin; he was still inexperienced "in the battle against sin or conscience and the law"; now, however, he must look upon Luther as St. Peter, who speaks to him as he did to the lame man: "In the name of Christ, arise and walk"; Christ did not wish him to be "crucified with sorrow"; this came from the devil.—We do not learn that these words had any effect.

[3] Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 416. [4] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 2, p. 193.

[5] "Fortgesetzte Sammlung," Leipzig, 1740, p. 519.

[6] M. Hempel, "Libellus H. Welleri," Lipsiæ, 1581, p. 60.

at Allerstedt in Thuringia,[1] and with Simon Musæus, who died at Mansfeld in 1576 as Superintendent and who composed two works against the devil of melancholy.[2] Nicholas Selnecker, who died Superintendent at Leipzig, was responsible for the rearranged edition of Luther's Table-Talk; according to the title his hope was to produce a work "which it might console all Christians to read, especially in these wretched last days." Elsewhere he confirms the need of such consolation when he says: "We experience in our own selves" that sadness is of frequent occurrence.[3]

Wolfgang Capito, the Strasburg preacher, wrote in 1536 to Luther that his experience of the want of agreement in doctrine had caused him such distress of mind that he was on the verge of the "malady of melancholia"; he trusted he would succeed in reaching a better frame of mind; the burden of gloom, so he comforts himself, was, after all, not without its purpose in God's plan in the case of many under the Evangel. With Capito, too, melancholy was a "frequent guest."[4] Bucer wrote in 1532 to A. Blaurer that Capito had often bemoaned "his rejection by God."[5]

Joachim Camerarius, the celebrated Humanist and writer, confessed in a letter to Luther, that he was oppressed and reduced to despair by the sight of the decline in morals "in people of every age and sex, in every condition and grade of life"; everything, in both public and private life,

[1] H. Weller, Preface to Beltzius, "On Man's Conversion," Leipzig, 1575.

[2] He wrote "Against the grievous plague of Melancholy," Erfurt, 1557, and "A useful instruction against the demon of melancholy," 1569 (s.l.). In the latter work he says in the Preface that he considered himself all the more called to comfort "sad and sorrowful hearts" because he himself "not seldom lay sick in that same hospital."

[3] "We experience in our own selves, that our hearts become increasingly stupid, weak and timid, and often know not whence it comes or what it is." "Der ganze Psalter," Bd. 2, Nürnberg, 1565, p. 94.—On his edition of the Table-Talk, cp. "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. xvi.

[4] Cp. Kolde, "Analecta," p. 231, where Capito's letter to Luther of June 13, 1536, is given. The letter is also in Luther's "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 353. Capito there laments, "*me deiectiorem apud me factum, adeo ut in morbum melancholicum prope inciderim. Hilaritatem, si potero, revocabo.*" The internal dissensions, which pained and distressed him to the last degree, were the immediate cause of his sadness, so he declares.

[5] C. Gerbert, "Gesch. der Strassburger Sektenbewegung zur Zeit der Reformation," Strasburg, 1889, p. 183 f.

was so corrupt that he felt all piety and virtue was done for. Of the Schools in particular he woefully exclaimed that it would perhaps be better to have none than to have "such haunts of godlessness and vice." At the same time, however, he makes admissions concerning faults of his own which may have served to increase his dejection: He himself, in his young days, had, like others, disgraced himself by a very vicious life ("*turpissime in adolescentia deformatum*").[1]

The Nuremberg preacher, George Besler, fell into a state of melancholia, declared "in his ravings that things were not going right in the Church," began to see hidden enemies everywhere and finally committed suicide with a "hog-spear" in 1536.[2] William Bidembach, preacher at Stuttgart, and his brother Balthasar, Abbot of Bebenhausen, both became a prey to melancholia towards the end of their life.[3]

It would, of course, be foolish to think that many good souls, in the simplicity of their heart, found no consolation in the new teaching and in working for its furtherance. Of the preachers, for instance, Beltzius, who has just been mentioned, declares, that, amidst his sadness Luther's consolations had "saved him from the abyss of hell."[4] Amongst those who adhered in good faith to the innovations there were some who highly lauded the solace of the Evangel. But, notwithstanding all that may be alleged to the contrary, we cannot get over such testimonies as the following.

Felix, son of the above-mentioned William Bidembach, and Court preacher in Würtemberg, declared in a "Hand-book for young church ministers": "It happens more and more frequently that many pious people fall into distressing sadness and real melancholia, to such an extent that they constantly experience in their hearts fear, apprehension, dread and despair"; in the course of his ministry he had met with both persons of position and common folk who were oppressed with such melancholia.[5] Nicholas Selnecker (above, p. 220) assures us that not only were theologians

[1] Kolde, "Analecta," p. 462 *seq.*

[2] Contemporary account in J. C. Siebenkees, "Materialien zur Nürnberg. Gesch.," 2, Nuremberg, 1792, p. 754.

[3] Fischlin, "*Memoria theologorum Wirtembergensium*," 1, Ulmæ, 1720, pp. 144, 171.

[4] Cp. Beltzius, "Vom Jammer und Elend menschlichen Lebens und Wesens," Leipzig, 1574, Bl. 3′.

[5] "Handbuch," etc., Frankfurt a. M., 1613, p. 725 f. (1 ed., 1603).

perplexed with many "melancholy and anxious souls and consciences whom nothing could console," but physicians, too, "never remembered such prevalence of evil melancholia, depression and sadness, even in the young, and of other maladies arising therefrom, as during these few years, and such misfortune continues still to grow and increase."[1]

The Leipzig Pastor, Erasmus Sarcerius, speaks in a similar strain of the "general faint-heartedness prevalent in every class," who are acquainted with nothing but "fear and apprehension";[2] Victorinus Strigel, Professor at the University of Leipzig, of the "many persons who in our day have died simply and solely of grief";[3] Michael Sachse, preacher at Wechmar, of people generally as being "timid and anxious, trembling and despairing from fear."[4]

When the preacher Leonard Beyer related to Luther how in his great "temptations" the devil had tried to induce him to stab himself, Luther consoled him by telling him that the same had happened in his own case.[5]

We are told that in latter life Luther's pupil Mathesius was a prey to a "hellish fear" which lasted almost three months; "he could not even look at a knife because the sight tempted him to suicide."[6] Later, his condition improved. The same Mathesius relates how Pastor Musa found consolation in his gloomy doubts on faith in Luther's account of his own similar storms of doubt.[7]

In the 16th century we hear many lamentations in Protestant circles concerning the unheard-of increase in the number of suicides.

"There is such an outcry amongst the people," wrote the Lausitz Superintendent, Zacharias Rivander, "that it deafens one's ears and makes one's hair stand on end. The people are so heavy-hearted and yet know not why. Amidst such lowness of spirit many are unable to find consolation, and, so, cut their throats and slay themselves."[8]—In 1554 the Nuremberg Councillor, Hieronymus Baumgärtner, lamented at a meeting attended by the clergy of the town: "We hear, alas, how daily

[1] "Der ganze Psalter," Bd. 2, Nuremberg, 1565, p. 94.
[2] Sarcerius, "Etliche Predigten," etc., Leipzig, 1551, Bl. C 2′.
[3] Strigel, "Ypomnemata 1," Lipsiæ, 1565, p. 219.
[4] Sachse, "Acht Trostpredigten," Leipzig, 1602, Bl. A 5′.
[5] Mathesius, "Aufzeichn.," p. 213 f. On the Disputation held at Leipzig by Beyer, the ex-Augustinian, see vol. i., p. 316.
[6] G. Loesche, "Joh. Mathesius," 1, Gotha, 1895, p. 223.
[7] Mathesius, "Historien," p. 147′.
[8] "Fest-Chronika," 2 Tl., Leipzig, 1602, Bl. 2′ (1 ed., 1591).

and more than ever before, people, whether in good health or not, fall into mortal fear and despair, lose their minds and kill themselves."[1] In 1569, within three weeks, fourteen suicides occurred at Nuremberg.[2]—"You will readily recall," Lucas Osiander said in a sermon about the end of the century, "how in the years gone by many otherwise good people became so timorous, faint-hearted and full of despair that they could not be consoled; and how of these not a few put an end to their own lives; this is a sign of the Last Day."[3]

Luther himself confirms the increase in the number of suicides which took place owing to troubles of conscience.

In a sermon of 1532 he bemoans, that "so many people are so disquieted and distressed that they give way to despair"; this was chiefly induced by the "spirits," for there "have been, and still are, many who are driven by the devil and plagued with temptations and despair till they hang themselves, or destroy themselves in some other way out of very fear."[4] He is quite convinced that the devil "drives" all suicides and makes them helpless tools of his plans against human life.—It was to this idea that the Lutheran preacher Hamelmann clung when he wrote, in 1568, that many trusted "that those who had been overtaken and destroyed by the devil would not be lost irretrievably."[5]

Andreas Celichius, Superintendent in the Mark of Brandenburg, was of opinion that such suicides, such "very sudden and heartrending murders," "gave a bad name to the Evangel in the world"; one sees and hears "that some in our very midst are quite unable to find comfort in the Evangelical sanctuary. . . . This makes men distrustful of the preaching of Jesus Christ and even causes it to be hated."[6]

Michael Helding, Bishop-auxiliary of Mayence, found a special reason for the increase in the number of suicides amongst those who had broken with the Church, in their rejection of the Catholic means of grace. In a sermon which he delivered towards the end of 1547 at the Diet of Augsburg he pointed out that, ever since the use of the Sacraments had been scorned, people were more exposed to the strength of the evil one and to discouragement. "When has the devil ever driven so many to desperation, so that they lose all hope and kill themselves? Whose fault is it? Ah, we deprive ourselves of God's grace and refuse to accept the Divine strength which is offered us in the Holy Sacraments."[7]

[1] G. Th. Strobel, "Neue Beyträge zur Literatur," I, Nuremberg, 1790, p. 97.

[2] Hondorf-Sturm, "Calendarium Sanctorum," Leipzig, 1599, p. 338.

[3] L. Osiander, "Bauren-Postilla," 4 Tl., Tübingen, 1599, p. 188.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 365.

[5] Hocker-Hamelmann, "Der Teufel selbs," 3 Tl., Ursel, 1568. p. 130.

[6] Celichius in a work on suicide: "Nützlicher und nothwendiger Bericht von den Leuten, so sich selbst aus Angst, Verzweiffelung oder andern Ursachen entleiben und hinrichten," Magdeburg, 1578, Bl. A 2, S 5, R 5′.

[7] Helding, "Von der hailigisten Messe," Ingolstadt, 1548, p. 7.

Among the Lutheran preachers the expected end of the world was made to play a part and to explain the increase of faint-heartedness and despair.

Mathesius says in his Postils: "Many pine away and lose hope; there is no more joy or courage left among the people; therefore let us look for the end of the world, and prepare, and be ready at any moment for our departure home!" "For the end is approaching; heaven and earth and all government now begin to crack and break."[1]

Luther's example proved catching, and the end of the world became a favourite topic both in the pulpit and in books, one on which the preachers' own gloom could aptly find vent. The end of all was thought to be imminent. Such forebodings are voiced, for instance, in the following: "No consolation is of any help to consciences";[2] "many pine away in dejection and die of grief";[3] "in these latter days the wicked one by his tyranny drives men into fear and fright";[4] "many despair for very dejection and sadness";[5] "many pious hearts wax cowardly, seeing their sins and the wickedness of the world";[6] "the people hang their heads as though they were walking corpses and live in a constant dread";[7] "all joy is dead and all consolation from God's Word has become as weak as water";[8] the number of those "possessed of the devil body and soul" is growing beyond all measure.[9]

[1] "Postilla oder Auslegung der Sonntagsevangelien," Nuremberg, 1565, p. 14.

[2] Selnecker, "Tröstliche schöne Sprüch für die engstigen Gewissen," Leipzig, 1561, Preface.

[3] Georg Major (a Wittenberg Professor), "*Homiliæ in Evangelia dominicalia*," 1, Wittenbergæ, 1562, p. 38.—Johann Pomarius, preacher at Magdeburg: "People are growing so distressed and afflicted that they droop and languish," etc., the Last Day is, however, "at the door." "Postilla," Bd. 1, Magdeburg, 1587, p. 6 f.

[4] Nikol. Kramer, "Würtzgärtlein der Seelen," Frankfurt a. M., 1573, Bl. V., 3′. Still more emphatically the preacher Sigismund Suevus ("Trewe Warnung für der leidigen Verzweiffelung," Görlitz, 1572, p. A 3′): The devil raves and rages in these latter days like a mad dog and tries above all to make people despair.

[5] Christoph Irenæus, preacher at Eisleben, "Prognosticon," 1578, (s.l.), Bl. D d 3.

[6] Joh. Beltzius, "Vom Jammer," etc., Bl. B 3′.

[7] Ruprecht Erythropilus, preacher at Hanover, "Weckglock," etc., Frankfurt a. M., 1595, p. 181 f.

[8] Valerius Herberger, preacher at Fraustädt, "Herzpostilla," Bl. 1, Leipzig, 1614, p. 16 ff.

[9] Andreas Celichius, "Notwendige Erinnerung," etc., Wittenberg, 1595, Bl. A 3 ff. He enumerates with terror thirty possessed persons

Though the special advantage claimed for the new Evangel lay in the sure comfort it afforded troubled consciences, many found themselves unable to arouse within them the necessary faith in the forgiveness of their sins. Luther's own experience, viz. that "faith won't come,"[1] was also that of many of the preachers in the case of their own uneasy and tortured parishioners; their complaints of the fruitlessness of their labours sound almost like an echo of some of Luther's own utterances.

"There are many pious souls in our churches," says Simon Pauli, of Rostock, "who are much troubled because they cannot really believe what they say they do, viz. that God will be gracious to them and will justify and save them."[2]

The widespread melancholy existing among the parishioners quite as much and sometimes more so than among the pastors, explains the quantity of consolatory booklets which appeared on the market during the second half of the 16th century, many of which were expressly designed to check the progress of this morbid melancholy.[3] Selnecker's work, mentioned above, is a specimen of this sort of literature. The Hamburg preacher, J. Magdeburgius, wrote: "Never has there been such need of encouragement as at this time."[4] The Superintendent, Andreas Celichius, laments that people "are quite unable to find comfort in the sanctuary of the Evangel, but, like the heathen who knew not God, are becoming melancholy and desperate," and this too at a time when "God, by means of the evangelical preaching, is daily dispensing abundantly all manner of right excellent and efficacious consolation, by the shovelful and not merely by the spoonful."[5]—It was, however, a vastly more difficult

in Mecklenburg alone, among whom, however, he probably includes many who were simply mad. "Here, in the immediate vicinity," he says, "three preachers have lost their minds, and would even appear to be bodily possessed." J. Moehsen ("Gesch, der Wissenschaften in der Mark Brandenburg," Berlin, 1781, p. 500) rightly remarked: "The plentiful writings and sermons on the devil's power, . . . on the portents of the Last Judgment, such as comets, meteors, bloody rain, etc., cost many their reason during the latter half of the 16th century."

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 452: "'*Articulus fidei*' won't go home, '*ideo tot accidunt tristitiæ.*'"

[2] "Extract oder Ausszug aus der Postill," Magdeburg, 1584, p. 16 f.

[3] See N. Paulus, "Die Melancholie im 16 Jahrh." ("Wiss. Beilage zur Germania," 1897, No. 18), p. 137 ff.; on p. 140 he refers to G. Draudius, "Bibl. libr. germ.," for the titles of many such works of consolation. For the above description we have made use of this rich article by Paulus and of his other one: "Der Selbstmord im 16 Jahrh.," *ibid.*, 1896, No. 1.

[4] "Eyne schöne Artzney, dadurch der leidenden Christen Sorge und Betrübnus gelindert werden," Lübeck, 1555, p. 145.

[5] *Op. cit.*, Bl. A 3′, R 5.

matter to find comfort in the bare "*Sola Fides*" than it had been for the ancestors of these Evangelicals to find it in the Church's way. Thanks to their co-operation, it was given to them to experience the vivifying and saving strength of the Sacraments and of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, to find example and encouragement in the veneration of the Saints and in the ritual, to be led to display their faith by the performance of good works in the hope of an eternal reward, and to enjoy in all the guidance and help of pastors duly called and ordained. In spite of all the abuses which existed, their Catholic forebears had never been deprived of these helps.

Many Protestants were driven by such considerations to return to the Church. Of this Nicholas Amsdorf complained. Many, he says, "have fallen away from Christ to Antichrist in consequence of such despair and doubts," and the uncertainty in matters of faith is nourished by the want of any unity in teaching, so that the people "do not know whom or what to believe";[1] this was also one of the reasons alleged by Simon Pauli why "many in the Netherlands and in Austria are now relapsing into Popery."[2]

"We find numerous instances in our day," Laurence Albertus said in 1574, "of how, in many places where Catholics and sectarians live together, no one was able to help a poor, deluded sectarian in spiritual or temporal distress, save the Catholic Christians, and especially their priests; such persons who have been helped admit that they first found real comfort among the Catholics, and now refuse to be disobedient to the Church any longer." Albertus wrote a "Defence" of such converts.[3]

Johann Schlaginhaufen, Luther's pupil, with the statements he makes concerning his own sad interior experiences, brings us back to his master.[4] Schlaginhaufen himself, even more than the rest, fell a prey to sadness, fear and thoughts of despair on account of his sins. Luther, to whom he freely confided this, told him it was "false that God hated sinners, otherwise He would not have sent His Son"; God hated only the self-righteous "who didn't want to be sinners." If Satan had not tried and persecuted me so much, "I should not now be so hostile to him." Schlaginhaufen, however, was unable to convince himself so readily that all his trouble came from the devil and not from his conscience. He said to Luther: "Doctor, I can't believe that it is only the devil who causes sadness, for the Law [the consciousness of having infringed it] makes the conscience sad; but the Law is good, for it comes from God, consequently neither is the sadness from Satan." Luther was only able to give an evasive answer and fell back on the proximity of the Last Day as a

[1] "Fünff fürnemliche Zeichen . . . vor dem jüngsten Tag," Jena, 1554, Bl. B 4′.

[2] *Op. cit.*, Magdeburg, 1584, p. 733.

[3] "Verthädigung deren, so sich diser Zeit . . . in den Frid der römischen Kirchen begeben," Dillingen, 1574, p. 72 f.

[4] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," pp. 9, 76, 88.

source of consolation : " In short, why we are so plagued, vexed and troubled is due to the Last Day. . . . The devil feels his kingdom is coming to an end, hence the fuss he makes. Therefore, my dear Turbicida [i.e. Schlaginhaufen], be comforted, hold fast to the Word of God, let us pray." Such words, however, did not suffice to calm the troubled man, who only became ever more dejected ; his inference appeared to him only too well founded : " The Law with its obligations and its terrifying menaces is just as much God's as the Gospel."

" How doleful you look," Luther said to him some weeks later. " I replied," so Schlaginhaufen relates : " ' Ah, dear Doctor, I was brooding ; my thoughts worry me and yet I can do nothing. I am unable to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel.' The Doctor replied : ' Yes, dear Master Hans, if you could do that then you would be indeed a Doctor yourself,' saying which he stood up and doffed his cap. . . . ' Paul and I have never been able to get so far . . . the best thing to do is to hold fast to the man Who is called Christ.' " In answer to a new objection Luther referred the young man to the secret counsels of God, for, according to him, there was a hidden God Who had not revealed Himself and of Whom men " were unable to know what He secretly planned,"[1] and a revealed God Who indeed speaks of a Divine Will that all should be saved ; how, however, this was to afford any consolation it is not easy to see.[1] On other occasions Luther simply ordered Schlaginhaufen to rely on his authority ; God Himself was speaking through him words of command and consolation. " You are to believe without doubting what God Himself has spoken to you, for I have God's authority and commission to speak to and to comfort you."[2]

[1] Luther to Count Albert of Mansfeld, Dec. 8, 1542, " Briefe," 5, p. 514. Cp. vol. ii., pp. 290 and 268 f.

[2] Schlaginhaufen, " Aufzeichn.," p. 21.

CHAPTER XXV

IN THE NARROWER CIRCLE OF THE PROFESSION AND FAMILY LUTHER'S BETTER FEATURES

1. The University Professor, the Preacher, the Pastor

Relations with the Wittenberg Students.

Among the pleasing traits in Luther's picture a prominent one is the care he evinced for the students at Wittenberg.

The disagreeable impression caused by the decline of the University town is to some extent mitigated by the efforts Luther made to check the corruption amongst the scholars of the University. He saw that they were supervised, so far as academic freedom permitted, and never hesitated to blame their excesses from the pulpit. At the same time, in spite of the growing multiplicity of his labours and cares, he showed himself a helpful father to them even in temporal matters, for instance, when he inveighed in a sermon against their exploitation at the hands of burghers and peasants: They were being sucked dry and could scarcely be treated worse; this he had heard from all he knew.[1]

The respect he enjoyed and the example of his own simple life lent emphasis to his moral exhortations. His eloquent lectures were eagerly listened to; his delivery was vivid and impressive. People knew that he did not lecture for the sake of money and, even at the height of his fame, they gladly pointed to the unassuming life he led at home. He did not expect any marks of respect from the students, greatly as they, and not only those of the theological Faculty, esteemed him. Melanchthon had introduced the custom of making the students stand when Luther entered the class-room; Luther, however, was not at all pleased with this innovation and said petulently: "*Doxa, doxa est magna noxa;* who runs after glory never gets it."[2]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 418 f., in the sermons of 1528, recently published.

[2] Mathesius, "Historien," p. 154′; Kroker, "Mathesius' Tischreden," Einleitung, p. 70.

Oldecop, the Catholic chronicler and Luther's former pupil, who, as a youth and before the apostasy, had listened to him at Wittenberg, remembered in his old age how Luther, without setting himself in opposition to their youthful jollifications had known how to restrain them; just as he "reproved sin fearlessly from the pulpit,"[1] so he earnestly sought to banish temptation from the pleasures of the students.

We may here recall, that, as early as 1520, Luther had urged that all bordels should be done away with, those "public, heathenish haunts of sin," as he termed them, at the same time using their existence as a weapon against the Catholic past.[2] The fact that many such houses were closed down at that time was, however, to some extent due to fear of the prevalent "French disease."

When, in his old age, in 1543, the arrival of certain light women threatened new danger to the morals of the Wittenberg students, already exposed to the ordinary temptations of the town, Luther decided to interfere and make a public onslaught at the University. This attack supplies us with a striking example of his forcefulness, whilst also showing us what curious ideas and expressions he was wont to intermingle with his well-meant admonitions.

"The devil," so he begins, "has, by means of the gainsayers of our faith and our chief foes [presumably the Catholics], sent here certain prostitutes to seduce and ruin our young men. Hence I, as an old and tried preacher, would paternally implore you, my dear children, to believe that the Wicked One has sent these prostitutes hither, who are itchy, shabby, stinking and infected with the French disease as, alas, experience daily proves. Let one good comrade warn the other, for one such infected strumpet can ruin 10, 20, 30, or even 100 sons of good parents and is therefore to be reckoned a murderess and much worse than a poisoner. Let one help the other in this poisonous mess, with faithful advice and warning, as each one would himself wish to be done by!"

He then threatens them with the penalties of the Ruler, which dissolute students had to fear, "in order that they may take themselves off, and the sooner the better"; "here [at Wittenberg] there is a Christian Church and University to which people resort to learn the Word of God, virtue and discipline. Whoever wants to drab had better go elsewhere."

Were he able, he would have such women "bled and broken

[1] Oldecop, "Chronik," ed. Euling, p. 40.
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, pp. 687, 572, n.

on the wheel." Young people ought, however, to resist concupiscence and fight against "their heat"; it was not to no purpose that the Holy Ghost had said: "Go not after thy lusts" (Eccl. xviii. 30). He concludes: "Pray God He may send you a pious child [in marriage], there will in any case be trouble enough."[1]

Some polemics have characterised such exhortations of Luther's as mere "hypocrisy." Whoever knows his Luther, knows, however, how unfounded is this charge. Nor was there any hypocrisy about the other very urgent exhortation which Luther caused to be read from the pulpit at Wittenberg in 1542, when himself unable to preach, and which is addressed to both burghers and students. He there implores "the town and the University for God's sake not to allow it to be said of them, that, after having heard God's Word so abundantly and for so long, they had grown worse instead of better." "Ah, brother Studium," he says, "spare me and let it not come to this that I be obliged like Polycarp to exclaim, 'O my God, why hast Thou let me live to see this?'" He points to his "grizzly head" which at least should inspire respect.[2]

The Preacher and Catechist.

As a preacher Luther was hard-working, nay, indefatigable; in this department his readiness of speech, his familiarity with Holy Scripture and above all his popular ways stood him in good stead. At first he preached in the church attached to the monastery; later on his sermons were frequently preached in the parish church, and, so long as his health stood the strain, he sometimes even delivered several sermons a day.[3] Even when not feeling well he took advantage of every opportunity to mount the pulpit. In 1528 he took over the parochial sermons during Bugenhagen's absence from Wittenberg,[4] in spite of being already overworked and ill in body.

All were loud in their praise of the power and vigour of his style. Mathesius in his "Historien" records a remark to this effect of Melanchthon's.[5] Luther frequently laid down, after his own fashion, the rules which should guide those who preach to the little ones and the poor in spirit: "Cursed and anathema be all preachers who treat of high,

[1] May 13, 1543, "Briefe," 5 (De Wette and Seidemann), p. 560.

[2] 1542, possibly Feb. or Nov. "Briefe," 6, p. 302. Cp. the Rector's exhortation to the students on Feb. 18, 1542, "Corp. ref.," 4, p. 780 *seq.*

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 178.

[4] Published from notes taken at the time.

[5] "Historien," p. 216.

difficult and subtle matters in the churches, put them to the people and preach on them, seeking their own glory or to please one or two ambitious members of the congregation. When I preach here I make myself as small as possible, nor do I look at the Doctors and Masters, of whom perhaps forty may be present, but at the throng of young people, children and common folk, from a hundred to a thousand strong; it is to them that I preach, of them that I think, for it is they who stand in need."[1] And elsewhere: "Like a mother who quiets her babe, dandles it and plays with it, but who must give it milk from her breast, and on no account wine or Malmsey, so preachers must do the same; they ought so to preach in all simplicity that even the simple-minded may hear, grasp and retain their words. But when they come to me, to Master Philip, to Dr. Pommer, etc., then they may show off their learning—and get a good drubbing and be put to shame." But when they parade their learning in the pulpit this is merely done "to impose on and earn the praise of the poor, simple lay-folk. Ah, they say, that is a great scholar and a fine speaker, though, probably, they neither understood nor learnt anything."[2]

"Nor should a preacher consider individual members of his congregation and speak to them words of comfort or reproof; what he must seek to benefit is the whole congregation. St. Paul teaches this important doctrine [2 Cor. ii. 17]: 'We speak with sincerity in Christ as from God and before God.' God, Christ and the angels are our hearers, and if we please them that is enough. Let us not trouble ourselves about the world and about private persons! We will not speak in order to please any man nor allow our mouth to be made the 'Arschloch' of another. But when we have certain persons up before us, then we may reprove them privately and without any rancour."[3]

As a preacher he was able often enough to tell the various classes quite frankly what he found to censure in them. At the Court, for instance, he could, when occasion arose, reprove the nobles for their drunkenness, and that in language not of the choicest.[4] He was not the man to wear

[1] He says this to Pastor Bernard of Dölen, "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 272 f. Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 140.
[2] "Werke," *ibid.*, p. 273.
[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 389
[4] See above, vol. iii., p. 309.

kid gloves, or, as an old German proverb he himself quoted said, to let a spider spin its web over his mouth. A saying attributed to him characterises him very well, save perhaps in its latter end: Come up bravely, speak out boldly, leave off speedily.[1] "I have warned you often enough," so we read in the notes of a Wittenberg sermon of Sep. 24, 1531,[2] "to flee fornication, and yet I see that it is again on the increase. It is getting so bad that I shall be obliged to say: Bistu do zurissen, sso lop dich der Teuffl."[3] The preacher then turns to the older hearers, begging them to use their influence with the younger generation, to prevail on them to abstain from this vice.

As to his subject-matter, he was fond of urging Biblical texts and quotations, wherein he displayed great skill and dexterity. In general, however, his attacks on Popery are always much the same; he dwells with tiresome monotony on the holiness-by-works and the moral depravity of the Papists. Though his theory of Justification may have proved to him a never-failing source of delight, yet his hearers were inclined to grow weary of it. He himself says once: "When we preach the '*articulum justificationis*' the people sleep or cough"; and before this: "No one in the people's opinion is eloquent if he speaks on justification; then they simply close their ears." Had it been a question of retailing stories, examples and allegories he could have been as proficient as any man.[4]

Mathesius has incorporated in his work some of Luther's directions on preaching which might prove a good guide to any pulpit orator desirous of being of practical service to his hearers.[5] Some of these directions and hints have recently appeared in their vigorous original in the Table-Talk edited by Kroker.

It was his wish that religious addresses in the shape of simple, hearty instructions on the Epistles and Gospels should be given weekly by every father to his family.[6] He himself, in his private capacity, set the example as early

[1] Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 184: "*Prædicator ascendat suggestum, aperiat os et desinat*," etc. See, *ibid.*, No. 316a, also pp. 139 and 196. [2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 2, p. 214.

[3] "Luthers Sprichwörtersammlung," ed. E. Thiele, Weimar, 1900, No. 483. [4] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 113 *seq.*

[5] "Historien," pp. 144, 148, 151, etc.

[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 21, p. 31.

as 1532 by holding forth in his own home on Sundays, when unable to preach in the church, before his assembled household and other guests. This he did, so he said, from a sense of duty towards his family, because it was as necessary to check neglect of the Divine Word in the home as in the Church at large.[1]

He also himself catechised the children at home, in order, as he declared, to fulfil the duties of a Christian father; on rising in the morning he was also in the habit of reciting the "Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Our Father and some Psalm as well" with the children.

He even expressed the opinion that catechetical instruction in church was of little use to children, but that in the home it was more successful and was therefore not to be omitted, however much trouble it might give. When, however, he adds, that the Papists had neglected such home teaching and had sacrificed the flock of Christ,[2] he is quite wrong. The fact is, that, before his day, it was left far too much to the family to give religious instruction to the children, there being as yet no properly organised Catechism in schools and churches. It was only the opposition aroused among Catholics by the religious changes that led to religious teaching becoming more widespread in the Catholic schools, and to a catechetical system being organised; a fuller religious education then served to check the falling away.[3] How highly, in spite of such apparent depreciation, he valued the ministerial teaching of the Catechism we learn from some words recorded by Mathesius: "If I had to establish order, I should see that no preacher was nominated who had not previously taught the '*bonæ artes*' and the Catechism in the schools for from one to three years. Schools are also temples of God, hence the olden prophets were at once pastors and schoolmasters."[4] "There is no better way," he writes, "of keeping people devout and faithful to the Church than by the Catechism."[5]

At Wittenberg an arrangement existed, at any rate as

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 265.

[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 82.

[3] The lack of religious instruction in the schools is confirmed by Falk, "Die pfarramtlichen Aufzeichnungen des Florentius Diel zu Mainz (1491–1518)," 1904, p. 17.

[4] "Historien," 12 Predigt.

[5] To Margrave George of Brandenburg, Sep. 14, 1531, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 253 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 103).

early as 1528,[1] by which, every quarter, certain days were set apart for special sermons on the articles of the Catechism.[2] The Larger and the Smaller Catechism published by Luther (see vol. v., xxxiv., 2) were intended to form the basis of the verbal teaching everywhere. The three courses of sermons preached by Luther at Wittenberg in May, Sep. and Nov., 1528, and since edited by George Buchwald, were arranged to suit the contents of the Greater Catechism and to some extent served Luther as a preparation for this publication. Luther, in the first instance, brought out the Smaller Catechism, as we see from certain letters given by Buchwald, not in book form, but, agreeably with an earlier ecclesiastical practice, on separate sheets in the shape of tablets to hang upon the walls; hence what he said on Dec. 18, 1537, of his being the author of the Catechism, the "*tabulæ*" and the Confession of Augsburg.[3]

He displayed great talent and dexterity in choosing the language best suited to his subject. We hear him denouncing with fire and power the vice of usury which was on the increase.[4] He knows how to portray the past and future judgments of God in such colours as to arouse the lukewarm. When treating of the different professions and ways of ordinary life he is in his own element and exhibits a rare gift of observation. On the virtues of the home, the education of children, obedience towards superiors, patience in bearing crosses and any similar ethical topics which presented themselves to him, his language is as a rule sympathetic, touching and impressive; in three wedding sermons which we have of him he speaks in fine and moving words on love and fidelity in the married state.[5]

In addition to his printed sermons, which were polished and amended for the press and from which we have already given many quotations on all sorts of subjects, the hasty, abbreviated notes of his sermons, made by zealous pupils, give us an insight into a series of addresses full of originality,

[1] See vol. v., xxxiv., 2.

[2] Cp. O. Clemen, "Zeitschrift für KG.," 1909, p. 382.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 352. Agricola had excused himself by saying he had not attacked Luther but Cruciger and Rörer. Luther replied: "*Catechismus, tabulæ, confessio Augustana, etc., mea, non Crucigeri nec Rœreri sunt.*"

[4] See vol. vi., xxxv., 6, on his attitude to the taking of interest.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 18^2, pp. 89 ff., 105 ff.; 19^2, p. 243 ff. Cp. above, p. 142.

outspokenness and striking thoughts. Indeed these notes, which are becoming better known at the present day, frequently render the sermons in all their primitive simplicity far better than do the more carefully arranged printed editions.

Luther, in 1524, according to one of these sets of notes, spoke on Good Works in the following style : " The Word is given in order that you may awaken ! It is meant to spur you on to do what is good, not that you should lull yourself in security. When fire and wood [come together there ensues a fire ; so you. in like manner, must be inflamed]. If, however, the effect of the sermon is, that you do not act towards your brother as Christ does towards you, that is a bad sign, not, indeed, that you must become a castaway, but that you may go so far as one day to deny the Word." " The devil knows that sin does not harm you, but his aim is to tear Christ out of your heart, to make you self-confident and to rob you of the Word. Hence beware of being idle under the influence of Grace. Christ is seen with you when you take refuge in Him, whether you be in sin or at the hour of death," etc. " This is preached to you daily, but we produce no effect. Christ has bones and flesh, strength and weakness. Let each one see to it that above all he possess the faith . . . the Gospel is preached everywhere, but few indeed understand it. Christ bore with His followers. In the same way must we behave towards the weak. And the day will come when at last they will understand, like the disciples. But that will never be unless persecution comes."[1]

Excerpts from Luther's Sermons on Our Lady.

In a sermon of 1524 on the Feast of the Visitation, taken down in Latin by the same reporter and recently published, Luther not only voices the olden view concerning the virtues and privileges of the Blessed Virgin but also, incidentally, supplies us with a sample of his candour in speaking of the faults of his hearers : " You are surprised that now I preach here so seldom, I, on the other hand, am surprised that you do not amend. There may possibly be a few to whom the preaching is of some avail; but the more I preach, the more ungodliness increases. It is not my fault, for I know that I have told you all what God gave me [to speak]. I am not responsible and my conscience is at peace. I have forced you to nothing. We have introduced two collections. If they are not to your taste, do away with them again. We shall not force you to give even a single penny."[2]—He then deals with the Gospel of the Feast which records Mary's visit to Elizabeth, and the canticle of praise with which she greeted her cousin. He draws apt lessons from it and praises the virtues and the dignity of the Blessed Virgin in a way that does him honour :

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 437.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 641 ff., " Collections " is our amendment for " Lections."

" First of all you see how Mary's faith finds expression in a work of charity. Her faith was not idle but was proved real by her acting as a mere maid, seeking out Elizabeth and serving her. Her faith was immense, as we also learn from other Gospel-readings. That is why Elizabeth said to her : ' Blessed art thou that hast believed.' . . . This is a true work of faith when impelled thereby we abase ourselves and serve others. We, too, hear all this, but the works are not forthcoming. . . . Yet where there is real faith, works are never absent."

" When Mary was magnified by Elizabeth with words of praise, it was as though she did not hear them, for she paid no heed to them. Every other woman would have succumbed to the temptation of vainglory, but she gives praise to Him to Whom alone praise is due. From this example all Christians, but particularly all preachers, ought to learn. You know that God preserves some preachers in a state of grace, but others He permits to fall. . . . God must preserve them like Mary so that they do not grow proud. When God bestows His gifts upon us it is hard not to become presumptuous and self-confident. If, for instance, I am well acquainted with Scripture, people will praise me on this account, and when I am praised, I, as a carnal man, am exposed to the fire ; when on the contrary I am despised, etc. [i.e. this is helpful for my salvation]. . . . Mary acted as though she did not hear it, and never even thanked Elizabeth for her praise."

Mary said, so he continues, " My soul doth magnify the Lord, not myself ; I am a mere creature of God ; He might have set another in my place ; I magnify Him Who has made me a Mother." In this way Mary teaches us the right use of the gifts bestowed by God, for she rejoiced only in God. On the other hand, any woman who is even passably pretty becomes vain of herself, and any man who has riches, boasts of his possessions. Mary is merely proud that God, as she says, has regarded her humility. This is the praise which we too must pay her. We ought to extol her because she was chosen by the Divine Majesty to be the Mother of His Son. That, she says, will be proclaimed to the end of the world (" all generations shall call me blessed "), not on her own account, but because God has done this. Concerning her own good works and her virginity she was silent and simply said : " He has done great things in me." In the same way we ought to be nothing in our own eyes and before the world, but to rejoice simply because God has looked down on us, confessing that all we have comes from Him. In this spirit Mary counted up great gifts ; though she could have said : All that you have just told me is true. " Ah, hers was a fine spirit ; and her example will assuredly endure." " The whole world will never attain to it, for the soul that is not exalted by God's gifts and depressed by poverty is indeed hard to find." By her words, so the speaker continues, Mary condemned the world, raised herself above it and cast it aside ; her language was not human, but came to her from God.

Though such praise of Mary—from which at a later date Luther desisted—may be placed to his credit, yet it must be pointed out, that even the above discourse is disfigured by bitter and unwarrantable attacks on Catholic doctrine and practice. He even speaks as though the veneration of Mary did not rest on the principles we have just heard him expound, viz. on the dignity bestowed by God on Mary as the Mother of God, and on the virtues with which she was endowed from on high, such as faith and humility. The Catholic Church, so Luther complains quite unjustly and falsely, had made of Mary a goddess ("*fecimus eam Deam*") and had given her honour and praise without referring it to God.[1]

[1] Luther must have known that in Catholic worship the Divine Son is more honoured by the veneration of Mary than she herself. That adoration was paid to God alone and not to Mary he could see from the text of the prayers of the ancient Church. Luther, for instance, was acquainted with the Invitatories of the Office for the Feasts of Mary's Nativity and Assumption, the first of which commences with the words: "Let us celebrate the birth of the Virgin Mary," and then at once adds: "Let us adore her Son Christ our Lord"; while the second sets Our Lord in the first place and says: "Come, let us adore the King of Kings Whose Virgin Mother was to-day assumed into Heaven." Thus in the Liturgy which he himself had celebrated, the leading thought, that Christ was honoured in Mary, ran through the celebration of all her Feasts, from that of her entrance into this life to that of her exit. The Hymns to the Mother of God in Luther's day concluded as they do now: "Jesu, to Thee be glory, Who wast born of a virgin," etc. Any adoration of the Blessed Virgin as of a "goddess" was so alien to the people that it would have been rejected with indignation.

In the same way that the Invitatories just quoted expressly reserve adoration for the Divine Son, so the veneration of the Mother of God in the Church's Offices is justified on exactly the same grounds as those which, according to Luther, result from the mystery of the Visitation and from the Magnificat. The Church has always extolled Mary simply in the spirit of the Magnificat.—Luther himself had published a printed exposition of the Magnificat in 1521. There he still speaks of the Blessed Virgin in the usual way ("Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 545 f.; Erl. ed., 45, p. 214 f.). At the commencement of the work he invokes her assistance with the words: "May the same tender Mother of God obtain for me the spirit to interpret her song usefully and practically . . . that we may sing and chant this Magnificat eternally in the life to come. So help us God. Amen" (p. 546=214). In the same way, at the close, he expresses his hope that a right understanding of the Magnificat "may not only illumine and teach, but burn and live in body and soul; may Christ grant us this by the intercession and assistance of His dear Mother Mary. Amen" (p. 601=287). Thus he was then still in favour of the invocation and intercession of the Holy Mother of God, whereas later he set aside the invocation of any Saint, and declared it to be one of "the abuses of Antichrist." (See Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 1^2, p. 370 ff.)—Luther wrote his exposition of the Magnificat in the spirit which must inspire every theologian who studies the canticle, and which had been even stronger in him during his Catholic period. At the same time he obviously wished to work upon the wavering and cautious Court of the Elector, and for this

The supreme distinction which the Church acknowledges in Mary—viz. her immaculate conception and exemption from original sin from the first moment of her soul's existence—Luther himself accepted at first and adhered to for a considerable time, following in this the tradition of his Order.[1]

All honour was to be given to Christ as God; this right and praiseworthy view, which Luther was indefatigable in expressing, misled him in the matter of the veneration and invocation of Mary and the Saints. Of this he would not hear, though such had ever been the practice of the Church, and though it is hard to see how God's glory can suffer any derogation through the honour paid to His servants. In this Luther went astray; the dogma of the adorable Divinity of Jesus Christ was, however, always to remain to him something sacred and sublime.

Statements to Luther's advantage from various Instructions. His Language.

In his sermons Luther was so firm in upholding the Divinity of Christ, in opposition to the scepticism he thought he detected in other circles, that one cannot but be favourably impressed. He was filled with the liveliest sense of man's duty of submitting his reason to this mystery; he even goes too far, in recommending abdication of the intellect and in his disparagement of human reason; what

reason dedicated this work, which, though peaceful in tone, contained hidden errors, to Prince Johann Frederick in a submissive letter. It should be noted that Luther wrote this dedication soon after receiving his summons to Worms. It is dated March 10, 1521 (*ibid.*, p. 545=212. Cp. "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 109).

[1] He admitted this belief handed down in the Catholic Schools, though not proclaimed a dogma till much later, in the sermon he preached in 1527 "on the day of the Conception of Mary the Mother of God": "It is a sweet and pious belief that the infusion of Mary's soul was effected without original sin; so that in the very infusion of her soul she was also purified from original sin and adorned with God's gifts, receiving a pure soul infused by God; thus from the first moment she began to live she was free from all sin" ("Werke," Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 58). The sermon was taken down in notes and published with Luther's approval. The same statements concerning the Immaculate Conception still remain in a printed edition published in 1529, but in the later editions which appeared during Luther's lifetime they disappear. (Cp. N. Paulus, "Lit. Beil. der Köln. Volksztng.," 1904, No. 41.) In a work of 1521 he says: Mary not only kept God's commandments perfectly but also "received so much grace that she was quite filled with it, as we believe" ("*Rationis Latomianæ confutatio*," "Werke," Weim. ed., 8. p. 56; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 416). As Luther's intellectual and ethical development progressed we cannot naturally expect the sublime picture of the pure Mother of God, the type of virginity, of the spirit of sacrifice and of sanctity to furnish any great attraction for him, and as a matter of fact such statements as the above are no longer met with in his later works.

he is anxious to do is to make all his religious feeling culminate in a trusting faith in the words : " God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for us."

In his sermons and instructions he demands a similar yielding of reason to faith with regard to the mystery of Christ's Presence in the Sacrament, though in this case he had not shrunk from twisting the doctrine to suit his own ideas. It would hardly be possible to maintain more victoriously against all gainsayers the need of standing by the literal sense, or at least of excluding any figurative interpretation of, the words of institution " This is My Body," than Luther did in many of his pronouncements against the Sacramentarians.[1]

With advancing years, and in view of the dissensions and confusion prevailing in the Reformed camp, he came to insist more and more on those positive elements, which, for all his aversion for the ancient Church, he had never ceased to defend. Of this we have a monument in one of his last works, viz. the " Kurtz Bekentnis," to which we shall return later. Embittered by the scepticism apparent in Zwinglianism and elsewhere, which, as he thought, threatened to sap all religion, he there obeys his heart's instincts and gives the fullest expression to his faith in general and not merely to his belief in Christ's presence in the Sacrament.[2]

Concerning the Sacrament of the Altar he gave the following noteworthy answer to a question put to him jointly, in 1544, by the three princely brothers of Anhalt, viz. whether they should do away with the Elevation of the Sacrament in the liturgy. " By no means," he replied, " for such abrogation would tend to diminish respect for the Sacrament and cause it to be undervalued. When Dr. Pommer abolished the Elevation [at Wittenberg, in 1542] during my absence, I did not approve of it, and now I am even thinking of re-introducing it. For the Elevation is one thing, the carrying about of the Sacrament in procession quite another [at Wittenberg Luther would not allow such processions of the Sacrament]. If Christ is truly present in the Bread (' *in pane* '), why should He not be treated with the utmost respect and even be adored ? "— Joachim, Prince of Anhalt, added, when relating this :

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 23, pp. 64–302 ; Erl. ed., 30, pp. 16–150.
[2] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 32, pp. 397–425.

"We saw how Luther bowed low at the Elevation with great devotion and reverently worshipped Christ."[1]

Certain controversialists have undoubtedly been in the wrong in making out Luther to have been sceptical about, or even opposed at heart to, many of the ancient dogmas which he never attacked, for instance, the Trinity, or the Divinity of Christ. A few vague and incautious statements occasionally let slip by him are more than counterbalanced by a wealth of others which tell in favour of his faith, and he himself would have been the last to admit the unfortunate inferences drawn more or less rightly from certain propositions emitted by him. It is a lucky thing, that, in actual life, error almost always claims the right of not being bound down too tightly in the chains of logic. When Luther, for instance, made every man judge of the meaning of the Bible, he was setting up a principle which must have dissolved all cohesion between Christians, and thus, of necessity, he was compelled to limit, somewhat illogically, the application of the principle.

In a passage frequently cited against him, where he shows himself vexed with the ancient term employed by the Church to express the Son's being of the same substance with the Father ("*homoousios*"), it was not his intention to rail against the doctrine therein expressed, but merely to take exception to the word. He explicitly distinguishes between the word and the thing ("*vocabulum et res*"). He says that, so long as one holds fast to the doctrine ("*modo rem teneam*") scripturally defined by the Nicene Council, it was no heresy to dislike the word or to refuse to employ it.[2] Hence the passage affords no ground for saying, that "Luther was rash enough to tamper with the doctrine of the Person of Christ." On the other hand, the new doctrine of the omnipresence of the Body of Christ evolved by him during the controversy on the Sacrament, can scarcely be considered creditable.[3] His views on the "*communicatio idiomatum*"[4] in Christ, and particularly on the Redemption,[5] also contain contradictions not to be explained away.

Contrariwise we must dismiss the charge based on his repugnance for the word "Threefoldhood," by which Germans designate the Trinity, as if this involved antagonism on his part to the mystery itself. He was referring merely to the term when he said: "It is not particularly good German and does not sound well, but since it cannot be improved upon, we must speak as best we can."[6] An undeniable confession of faith in the Trinity is contained in this very passage, and in countless others too.—When abbreviating the Litany he indeed omitted the invocation "*Sancta Trinitas unus Deus*," but this was not from any hostility to the doctrine but from a wish not to have "too

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 341.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 117 f.; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 505 *seq.*
[3] Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 2^2, p. 145 f. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 192 ff.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 148–200.
[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 1^2, p. 1 f.; 12^2, p. 408.

many words." He left in their old places the separate invocations of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and deemed this quite sufficient.

By his retention of the belief in the three Divine Persons and in the Divinity of the Redeemer, Luther was instrumental in preserving among his future followers a treasure inherited from past ages, in which not a few have found their consolation. We must not be unmindful of how he strove to defend it from the assaults of unbelief, in his time still personified in Judaism. He did not sin by debasing the Second Person of the Trinity, but rather by foisting on God Incarnate attributes which are not really His; for instance, by arguing that, owing to the intimacy of the two Natures, Divine and Human, in Christ, His Human Nature must be as omnipresent as His Divine; or, again, by teaching that mere belief in one's redemption and sanctification suffices to destroy sin; or, again, when his too lively eschatological fancy led him to see Christ, the Almighty conqueror of the devil and his world, already on the point of coming to the Judgment. And just as Christ's Godhead was the very fulcrum of all his teaching, so he defended likewise the other Articles of the Apostles' Creed with such courage, force and eloquence, as, since his death, few of his followers have found themselves capable of. About the Person of the Redeemer he wove all the usual Christological doctrines, His Virgin Birth, His truly miraculous Resurrection, His descent into Hell, His Ascension and Second Advent; finally, also, the resurrection of the dead, the future Judgment, and the everlasting Heaven and everlasting Hell. From the well-spring of the ancient creed, under God's Grace, Lutherans without number have drawn and still continue to draw motives for doing what is good, consolation amidst affliction and strength to lead pious lives.

"What holiness, devotion and heroic virtue do we not find among non-Catholics. God's Grace is not confined within the four walls of the Catholic Church, but breathes even in the hearts of outsiders, working in them, when opportunity affords, the miracle of justification and adoption, and thus ensuring the eternal salvation of countless multitudes who are either entirely ignorant of the true Church, as are the upright heathen, or mistake her true form and nature as do countless Protestants, brought up amidst the

crassest prejudice. To all such as these the Church does not close the gates of Heaven " (J. Pohle).

It would be superfluous to enumerate amongst Luther's favourable traits the respect he always paid to Holy Scripture as the Word of God, demanding for its infallible revelations a willing faith and the sacrifice of one's own whims.

Greatly as he erred in wilfully applying his new, subjective principle of interpretation and in excluding certain of the Sacred Books, still the Bible itself he always declared to be an object of the highest reverence. Thanks to a retentive memory he made his own the words of Scripture, and even adopted its style. His " enthusiasm for the inexhaustible riches and Divine character of Holy Scripture," of which the earlier Döllinger speaks,[1] has, and with some reason, been held up by Luther's followers as the model, nay, the palladium of Lutheranism as a whole ; on the other hand, however, Döllinger's accompanying censure on Luther's " arbitrary misuse " of the Bible-text must also commend itself not only to Catholics but to every serious student of the Bible. High praise for Luther's acquaintance with Scripture combined with severe blame for his deviation from tradition are forthcoming from a contemporary of the early years of Luther's public career. In a short, unprinted and anonymous work entitled " Urteil über Luther," now in the Munich State Library, we read : " In the fine art of the written Word of God, i.e. the Bible, I hold Martin Luther to be the most learned of men, whether of those now living on earth or of those who have departed long since ; he is, moreover, well versed in the two languages, both Latin and German. I do not, however, regard him as a Christian —for to be learned and eloquent is not to be a Christian—but as a heretic and schismatic " ; he was, it adds, " the scourge of an angry God."[2]

In the field of scriptural activity his German translation of the whole Bible has procured for him enduring fame. Since the birth of Humanism not a few scholars had drawn attention to the languages in which the Bible was originally written ; Luther, however, was the first who ventured to make a serious attempt to produce a complete translation of all the Sacred Books on the basis of the original text.

Thanks to his German version, from the linguistic point of view so excellent, Protestants down to our own day have been familiar with the Bible. His rendering of the Bible

[1] Döllinger, " Luther, eine Skizze," p. 58 ; " KL.," 8^2, col. 343.
[2] " Cod. germ. Monacensis," 4842, Bl. 1, 2′.

stories and doctrines, at once so able and so natural, was a gain not only to the language of religion but even to profane literature, just as his writings generally have without question largely contributed to the furtherance of the German tongue.

The scholarly Caspar Ulenberg, writing on this subject from the Catholic side in the 16th century, expresses himself most favourably. "What Luther," he says, "after consulting the recognised opinion of Hebrew and Greek experts, took to be the true meaning of the text under discussion, that he clothed in pure and elegant German, on the cultivation of which he had all his life bestowed great care. He had made such progress in the art of writing, teaching and expounding, that, if we take into consideration the beauty and the brilliance of his language, so free from artifice, as well as the originality of his expression, we must allow that he excelled all in the use of the German tongue so that none can compare with him. Thus it was that he gained so uncanny an influence over the hearts of his Germans, that, by caressing and flattering and using the allurements of the Divine Word, he could make them believe whatever he pleased. In this translation of the Bible he was, above all, at pains, by means of a certain elegance and charm of speech, to entice all to become his readers, and thus to win men's hearts."[1]

Luther cannot indeed be called the creator of New-High-German, either by reason of his translation of the Bible or of his other German writings. Yet, using as he did the already existing treasure of the language with such ability, his influence on the German language was necessarily very great, especially as, owing to the great spread of his writings in those early days of printing, his works were practically the first in the literary field, and, indeed, in many places excluded all others. "Luther's importance as regards the language," declares one of the most recent students of this matter, "is less apparent in the details of grammar, in which he is sometimes rather backward, than in the general effect of his exertions on behalf of New-High-German." It is of small importance, the same writer remarks, "if in the mere wealth of common idioms one or other of the towns even within the confines of his native Saxon land—Grimma, Leipzig, Dresden—were in advance of the language employed by Luther."[2]

Luther's translation of the Bible will be treated of more in detail elsewhere (vol. v., xxxiv., 3). Here, however, mention may be made of the fine quality of the German used in his sermons, his theological and polemical writings, as well as in his popular works of devotion.

[1] "Gesch. Luthers," German edition, Mayence, 1836, p. 463 f.

[2] E. Gutjahr, "Zur Entstehung der neuhochdeutschen Schriftsprache"; "Studien zur deutschen Rechts- und Sprachgesch.," 2, Leipzig, 1906.

The figures and comparisons in which his sparkling fancy delights, particularly in the devotional booklets intended for the common people, his popular, sympathetic and often thoughtful adaptation of his language to the subject and to the personality of the reader, the truly German stamp of his phraseology, lending to the most difficult as well as to the most ordinary subjects just the clothing they require—all this no one can observe and enjoy without paying tribute to his gift of description and language.

"His vocabulary was strong and incisive," Johannes Janssen truly remarks, "his style full of life and movement, his similes, in their naked plainness, were instinct with vigour and went straight to the mark. He drew from the rich mines of the vernacular tongue, and in popular eloquence and oratory few equalled him. Where he still spoke in the spirit of the Catholic past his language was often truly sublime. In his works of instruction and edification he more than once reveals a depth of religious grasp which reminds one of the days of German mysticism.[1]

His first pupils could not sufficiently extol his gift of language. Justus Jonas in his panegyric on Luther declares, though his words are far-fetched: "Even the Chanceries have learnt from him, at least in part, to speak and write correct German; for he revived the use of the German language so that now we are again able to speak and write it accurately, as many a person of degree must testify and witness."[2] And of the influence of his spoken words on people's minds Hieronymus Weller declares, that it had been said of him, his words "made each one fancy he could see into the very hearts of those troubled or tempted, and that he could heal wounded and broken spirits."[3]

The Spiritual Guide.

Not merely as professor, preacher and writer, but also as spiritual leader, did Luther exhibit many qualities which add to the attraction of his picture. Whatever may be the habits of polemical writers, the historian who wishes to acquit himself properly of his task must not in so momentous

[1] "Hist. of the German People" (Eng. Trans.), 3, p. 238.

[2] "Leichenrede" of Feb. 19, 1546, commencement; "Luthers Werke," ed. Walch, 21, p. 362* ff.

[3] "Wellers Deutsche Schriften," Tl. 3, p. 215. Before this Weller remarks: "For he was equal to the greatest prophets and Apostles in spirit, strength, wisdom, ability and experience." He attributes to him "a prophetical spirit, notable strength, generosity and a power of faith such as we read existed in the prophet Elias. . . ." Great persecutions and temptations had been his masters and teachers; they it was who had taught him the art of speaking.

a matter evade the duty of depicting the favourable as well as the unfavourable sides of Luther's character.

Though Luther did not regard himself as the pastor of Wittenberg, yet as much depended on him there as if he had actually been the regular minister; moreover, as was only to be expected, throughout the Saxon Electorate as well as in other districts won over to him, he exercised a certain sway. As can be proved from his letters and other documents, he freely offered his best services, if only for the good repute of the Evangel, to abolish scandals, to punish preachers who led bad lives, to promote attendance at public worship and the reception of communion, to help on the cause of the schools and the education of the young, and in every other way to amend the Christian life.

In order to revive discipline at Wittenberg, he tried the effect of excommunication, though with no very conspicuous success. He took the brave step of placing the Town Commandant, Hans Metzsch, under a sort of ban for his notorious disregard of the Church.[1] What he then told the congregation was calculated to inspire a wholesome dread, and to recall them to their duties towards God and their neighbour. The incident was likely to prove all the more effectual seeing that Luther had on his side both Town Council and congregation, Metzsch having previously fallen out with them, a fact which undoubtedly emboldened Luther.[2]

When Antinomianism, with its perilous teaching against the binding character of the Divine Law, strove to strike root in the Saxon Electorate, he set himself with unusual vigour to combat the evil, and in his writings, sermons and letters set forth principles worthy of being taken to heart concerning the importance of the Commandments and the perils of self-will. Similar edifying traits are apparent in his struggle with other "Rotters." In the elimination of the sectarian element from the heart of the new faith and in instancing its dangers, he shows himself very emphatic, and, at times, the force of his reasoning is inimitable. Neither was he slow to find practical measures to ensure its extirpation, especially when it threatened the good name and stability of his work.[3]

[1] Above, p. 210. [2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, pp. 27, 37.

[3] On the inner connection between his own teaching and Antinomianism and on his controversy with Agricola, see vol. v., xxix., 2 and 3.

He exercised many of the other labours of his ministry by means of his writings; with the help of his pen and the press, he, in his quality of spiritual guide, attacked all the many-sided questions of life, seeking to impart instruction to his followers wherever they might chance to be. No one so far had made such use of the newly invented art of printing for the purpose of exerting religious influence and for spiritual government.

He despatched a vast number of circular-letters to the congregations, some with detailed and fervent exhortations; his Postils on the scriptural Lessons for the Sundays and Feast Days he scattered far and wide amongst the masses; he was also interested in good books on profane subjects, and exhorted all to assist in the suppression of obscene romances and tales;[1] he also set to work to purify Æsop's Fables—which, under Humanist influence, had become a source of corruption—from filthy accretions so that they might be of use in the education of the young.[2] The collection of German Proverbs which he commenced was also intended to serve for the instruction of youth.[3]

He justly regretted that amongst the Legends of the Saints current amongst the people there were many historical untruths and impossibilities. Many of his remarks on these stories do credit to his critical sense, particularly as in his time very few had as yet concerned themselves with the revision of these legends. It was far from advantageous to ecclesiastical literature, that, in spite of the well-grounded objections raised by Luther and by some Catholic scholars, deference to old-standing tradition allowed such fictions to be retained and even further enhanced. "It is the devil's own plague," Luther groans, "that we have no reliable legends of the Saints. . . . To correct them is an onerous task." "The legend of St. Catherine," he says on the same occasion to his friends, "is quite at variance with Roman history. Whoever concocted such a tale must now assuredly be sitting in the depths of hell."[4] He goes, however, too far when he says that the inaccuracies were intentional, "infamous" lies devised by Popery, and adds: "We never dared to protest against them."—As though such literary and

[1] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 504. [2] See vol. v., xxxiv., 2.
[3] E. Thiele, "Luthers Sprichwörtersamml.," Weimar, 1900.
[4] Mathesius, "Predigten," p. 346.

often poetic outgrowths of a more childlike age were not to be regarded as merely harmless, and as though criticism had been prohibited by the Church. It is true, nevertheless, that criticism had not been sufficiently exercised, and if Luther's undertaking and the controversies of the 16th century helped to arouse it, or, rather, to quicken the efforts already made in this direction, first in the field of Bible-study and Church-history and then, more gradually, in that of popular legendary and devotional literature, no wise man can see therein any cause for grief.

"An die Radherrn aller Stedte deutsches Lands, das sie christliche Schulen auffrichten und halten sollen" is the title of one of Luther's writings of 1524, in which he urges the erection of schools with such vigour that the circular in question must be assigned a high place among his hortatory works: "With this writing Luther will recapture the affection of many of his opponents," wrote a Zwickau schoolmaster after reading it.[1] "Ob Kriegsleutte auch ynn seligem Stande seyn künden" (1526) is the heading of another broadsheet of his, dealing with the secular sword, the divinely established "office of war" and the rights of the authorities. For this Luther made use of Augustine's work "*Contra Faustum manichæum.*"[2] It is said that part of the proofs, without any author's name, was put into the hands of Duke George of Saxony; thereupon he remarked to Lucas Cranach: "See, I have here a booklet which is better than anything Luther could do."[3] At a later date Luther urged the people in eloquent words to take up arms against the Turk, though he had at first been opposed to resistance; nevertheless, he ever maintained his unfavourable attitude towards the Empire, already described in vol. iii., even on this question of such vital importance to Germany. He was relentless in his criticism of German unpreparedness for war, of the fatal habit of disregarding danger and of other possible sources of disaster; he also advanced religious motives for joining in the war, and exhorted all the faithful bravely to assist by their prayers.

Whilst these and other writings deal with practical

[1] "Briefe an Stephan Roth," ed. Buchwald ("Archiv des deutschen Buchhandels," 16, 1893), p. 37; Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 548.

[2] L. Cardauns, "Die Lehre vom Widerstande des Volkes," Bonn, 1903, p. 125.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 10.

questions affecting public life in which his position and religious ideas entitled him to interfere, a large number of works and pamphlets are devoted to domestic and private needs. In his " Trost fur die Weibern welchen es ungerat gegangen ist mit Kinder Geberen " (1542) he even has a kind word for such wives as had had a miscarriage, and consoles those who were troubled about the fate of their unbaptised infants. From the theological point of view this subject had, however, been treated better and more correctly by others before his day. He was also at his post with words of direction and sympathy when pestilence threatened, as his writing " Ob man fur dem Sterben fliehen muge " (1527) bears witness. He frequently composed Prefaces to books written by others, in order to encourage the authors and to help on what he considered useful works ; thus, for instance, he wrote a commendatory Introduction to Justus Menius's " *Œconomia Christiana* " (1529).

The New Form of Confession.

Luther's pastoral experience convinced him that Confession was conducive to the maintenance and furtherance of religious life. He accordingly determined to re-introduce it in a new shape, i.e. without invalidating the doctrines he had preached concerning faith and freedom. Hence, at times we find him speaking almost like an apologist of the Church concerning this practice of earlier ages and its wholesome effects. He insists, however, that no confession of all mortal sins must be required, nor ought Confession to be made a duty, but merely counselled.

In his work " Von der Beicht, ob der Bapst Macht habe zu gepieten " (1521) he begins one section with the words : " Two reasons ought to make us ready and willing to confess," which he then proceeds to expound quite in the manner of the olden Catholic works of instruction.[1] Elsewhere he expresses his joy that Confession had been bestowed on the Church of Christ, especially for the relief of troubled consciences ; Confession and Absolution must not be allowed to fall into disuse ; to despise so costly a treasure would be criminal.

Of Luther himself it is related again and again, that, after

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 176 ; Erl. ed., 27, p. 367.

having confessed, he received "Absolution," either from Pastor Bugenhagen of Wittenberg or from someone else.

The words Absolution and Confession must not, however, as already hinted, be allowed to mislead those accustomed to their Catholic sense. Sometimes in Catholic works we read quotations from Luther which convey the wrong impression, that he had either retained the older doctrine practically entire, or at least wished to do so. So little is this the case, that, on the contrary, when he mentions Confession it is usually only to rail at the "slavery" of conscience and the spiritual tyranny of the past.[1] Absolution, according to him, could be received "from the lips of the pastor, or of some other brother."[2] Even the ordinary preaching of the Gospel to the faithful he considers as "fundamentally and at bottom an '*absolutio*' wherein forgiveness of sins is proclaimed."[3] In Confession there was no "Sacrament" in the sense that Baptism and the Supper were Sacraments, but merely "an exercise of the virtue of Baptism," an act in which the simple Word became a means of grace. The Word was to arouse and awaken in the heart of the Christian the assurance of forgiveness. The faith of the penitent is the sole condition for the appropriation of the Divine promises.[4] Of the way in which Luther in the Smaller Catechism nevertheless emphasises the significance of the Absolution given by the confessor,[5] Julius Köstlin says: "These statements of Luther's are in several ways lacking in clearness."[6]

I must, in my trouble, Luther says elsewhere of Confession, seek for comfort from my brother or neighbour, and "whatever consolation he gives me is ratified by God in heaven ['*erunt soluta in cælo*' (Mat. xviii. 18)]"; "He consoles me in God's stead and God Himself speaks to me through him." "When I receive absolution or seek for comfort from my brother," then "what I hear is the voice of the Holy Ghost Himself." "It is a wonderful thing, that a minister of the Church or any brother

[1] Cp. vol. i., pp. 290 ff., 379 ff., 384 f.; vol. ii., p. 59 ff.

[2] Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 2^2, p. 251; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 9, p. 23; "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 220; Erl. ed., 23, p. 40 f.; 46, p. 123.

[3] "An den Rat zu Nürnberg, Gutachten Luthers und Melanchthons" (April 18, 1533); "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 8 ("Briefwechsel" 9, p. 292).

[4] Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 252 f.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 21, p. 17 f.

[6] Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 249.

should be '*minister regni Dei et vitæ æternæ, remissionis peccatorum. . . .*"[1]

But all such private exercise of the power of the keys notwithstanding, the public exercise by the ordinary ministers of the Church was also to be held in honour; it was to take place "when the whole body of the Church was assembled."[2] In spite of the opposition of some he was always in favour of the general absolution being given during the service.[3] In this he followed the older practice which still exists, according to which, out of devotion and not with any idea of imparting a sacrament, the "*Misereatur*" and "*Indulgentiam*" were said over the assembled faithful after they had said the "*Confiteor.*" He also drew up a special form for this general confession and absolution.[4]

But even such public Confession was not, however, to be made obligatory; the very nature of Luther's system forbade his setting up rules and obligations. In the present matter Luther could not sufficiently emphasise the Christian's freedom, although this freedom, as man is constituted, could not but render impossible any really practical results. Hence Confession, private as well as public, was not to be prescribed, so much so that "those who prefer to confess to God alone and thereafter receive the Sacrament" are "quite at liberty to do so."[5] For Confession was after all merely a general or particular confession of trouble of conscience or sinfulness, made in order to obtain an assurance that the sins were all forgiven.

It was, however, of the utmost importance that the penitents should declare whether they knew all that was necessary about Christ and His saving Word, and that otherwise they should be

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 44, p. 107 ff.; 46, p. 292; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 11, p. 136. See also Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 250. Absolution may also be sent by one far away, as Luther wrote to Spalatin: "*Audi et crede iis quæ Christus per me tibi loquitur. Neque enim erro, quod scio, aut satanica loquor. Christus loquitur per me et iubet, ut fratri tuo in communi fide in eum credas. Ipse absolvit te ab hoc peccato et omnibus.*" Aug. 24, 1544, "Briefe," ed De Wette, 5, p. 680. [2] *Ibid.*, 44, p. 109.

[3] At Nuremberg Osiander had opposed the general absolution, and then, in spite of a memorandum from Wittenberg to the contrary (above, p. 349, n. 3), persisted in his opposition so that the magistrates made another application to Wittenberg on Sep. 27 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 337) and again got a similar reply ("Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 27; "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 343). In the new "memorandum" it was also stated that the public and the private absolution were real absolutions; but Osiander was not to be compelled to give the general absolution.

[4] "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 398. Form of Absolution dated Feb. 15, 1540, for the Nurembergers. The editor remarks: "The questionable point in this form, viz. that the Absolution was attached to an eventuality ('should God to-day or to-morrow call one of you from this vale of tears'), and might thus be regarded as valid only in this event, can merely be hinted at here."

[5] These words were added by Luther in 1538 to his "Unterricht der Visitatorn" (1528); "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 220; Erl. ed., 23, p. 40 f.; Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 251.

instructed. "If Christians are able to give an account of their faith," Luther says in 1540 of the practice prevailing at Wittenberg, "and display an earnest desire to receive the Sacrament, then we do not compel them to make a private Confession or to enumerate their sins." For instance, nobody thinks of compelling Master Philip (Melanchthon). "Our main reason for retaining Confession is for the private rehearsal of the Catechism."[1]

In 1532, amidst the disturbance caused by Dionysius Melander, the Zwinglian faction gained the upper hand at Frankfort on the Maine, and the preachers, supported by the so-called fanatics, condemned and mocked at the Confession, which, according to the Smaller Catechism, was to be made to a confessor, to be duly addressed as "Your Reverence." Luther, in his "Brieff an die zu Franckfort am Meyn" (Dec. 1532), accordingly set forth his ideas on Confession, in what manner it was to be retained and rendered useful.[2] "We do not force anyone to go to Confession," he there writes, "as all our writings prove, just as we do not enquire who rejects our Catechism and our teaching." He had no wish to drive proud spirits "into Christ's Kingdom by force." As against the self-accusation of all mortal sins required in Popery he had introduced a "great and sublime freedom" for the quieting of "agonised consciences"; the penitent need only confess "some few sins which oppress him most," even this is not required of "those who know what sin really is," "like our Pastor [Bugenhagen] and our Vicar, Master Philip." "But because of the dear young people who are daily growing up and of the common folk who understand but little, we retain the usage in order that they may be trained in Christian discipline and understanding. For the object of such Confession is not merely that we may hear the sins, but that we may learn whether they are acquainted with the Our Father, the Creed, the Ten Commandments and all that is comprised in the Catechism. . . . Where can this be better done, and when is it more necessary than when they are about to approach the Sacrament?"[3]

"Thus, previously [to the Supper], the common people are to be examined and made to say whether they know the articles of the Catechism and understand what it is to sin against them, and if they will for the future learn more and amend, and otherwise are not to be admitted to the Sacrament." "But if a pastor who is unable at all times and places to preach God's Word to the people, takes advantage of such time and place as offers when they come to Confession, isn't there just the devil of a row! As if, forsooth, he were acting contrary to God's command, and as if those fanatics were saints, who would prevent him from teaching God's Word at such a time and place, when in reality we are bound to teach it in all places and at all times when or wheresoever we can."[4]

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 185.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 558 ff.; Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 372 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 251).

[3] P. 565 ff. = 381 ff.

[4] P. 567 f. = 383, 385.

This instruction, which is the "main reason" for retaining Confession, is to be followed, according to the same letter, by "the *Absolutio*" pronounced by the preacher in God's stead, i.e. by the word of the confessor which may "comfort the heart and confirm it in the faith." Of this same word Luther says: "Who is there who has climbed so high as to be able to dispense with or to despise God's Word?"[1]

It is in the light of such explanations that we must appreciate the fine things in praise of Confession, so frequently quoted, which Luther says in his letter to Frankfurt.

Luther goes on to make an admission which certainly does him honour: "And for this [the consolation and strength it affords] I myself stand most in need of Confession, and neither will nor can do without it; for it has given me, and still gives me daily, great comfort when I am sad and in trouble. But the fanatics, because they trust in themselves and are unacquainted with sadness, are ready to despise this medicine and solace."

He had already said: "If thousands and thousands of worlds were mine, I should still prefer to lose everything rather than that one little bit of this Confession should be lost to the churches. Nay, I would prefer the Popish tyranny, with its feasts, fasts, vestments, holy places, tonsures, cowls and whatever I might bear without damage to the faith, rather than that Christians should be deprived of Confession. For it is the Christian's first, most necessary and useful schoo[l], where he learns to understand and to practise God's Word and his faith, which cannot be so thoroughly done in public lectures and sermons."[2]

"Christians are not to be deprived of Confession." On this, and for the same reasons, Luther had already insisted in the booklet on Confession he had published in 1529. The booklet first appeared as an appendix to an edition of his Greater Catechism published in that year, and is little more than an amended version of Rörer's notes of his Palm Sunday sermon in 1529.[3]

In this booklet on Confession, also entitled "A Short Exhortation to Confession,"[4] he says of the "secret Confession made to a brother alone": "Where there is something special that oppresses or troubles us, worries us and

[1] P. 569=386. [2] P. 569=385.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 29, p. 133 f.
[4] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 23, p. 87 ff.

will give us no rest, or if we find ourselves halting in our faith," we should " complain of this to a brother and seek counsel, consolation and strength." " Where a heart feels its sinfulness and is desirous of comfort, it has here a sure refuge where it may find and hear God's Word." " Whoever is a Christian, or wishes to become one, is hereby given the good advice to go and fetch the precious treasure." " Thus we teach now what an excellent, costly and consoling thing Confession is, and admonish all not to despise so fine a possession." As the " parched and hunted hart " panteth after the fountains, so ought our soul to pant after " God's Word or Absolution."—The zeal expected of the penitent is well described, but here, as is so often the case with Luther, we again find the mistake resulting from his false idealism, viz. that, after doing away with all obligation properly so called, personal fervour and the faith he preached would continue to supply the needful.

Before Luther's day Confession had been extolled on higher grounds than merely on account of the comfort and instruction it afforded. It had been recognised as a true Sacrament instituted by Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and committed by Him with the words " Whose sins you shall forgive," etc. (John xx. 22 f.), to the exercise of duly appointed ministers. Yet the earlier religious literature had not been behindhand in pointing out how great a boon it was for the human heart to be able to pour its troubles into the ears of a wise and kindly guide, who could impart a true absolution and pour the balm of consolation and the light of instruction into the soul kneeling humbly before him as God's own representative.

As regards the instruction, on which Luther lays such stress as the " main reason " for retaining the practice, the Catholic Confession handbooks of that period, particularly some recently re-edited, show how careful the Church was about this matter.

Franz Falk has recently made public three such handbooks, of which very few copies were hitherto known.[1] One of these is the work of a priest of Frankfurt a. M., Magister Johann Wolff (Lupi), and was first published in 1478; the second is a block-book containing a preparation for Confession, probably printed at Nuremberg in 1475; the third an Augsburg manual of Con-

[1] " Drei Beichtbüchlein nach den Zehngeboten aus der Frühzeit der Buchdruckerkunst," Münster, 1907 (" Reformationsgesch. Studien und Texte," Hft. 2).

fession printed in 1504. The last two were intended more for popular use and give the sins in the order of the Decalogue. The first, by Wolff, pastor of St. Peter's at Frankfurt, consists of two parts, one for children, the other for "older people, learned or unlearned," containing examinations of conscience, very detailed and explicit in some parts, into the sins against the Ten Commandments, the seven capital sins, and, finally, the sins committed with "the five outward senses." The examination of conscience for children, for the sake of instruction also includes the Our Father, Hail Mary, Creed and Decalogue, also the list of capital sins, Sacraments and Eight Beatitudes. The copious Latin tags from Peter Lombard, Scotus, Gerson, etc., point to the manual having been meant primarily as a guide for the clergy, on whom an appendix also impresses the advantages of a frequent explanation of the Ten Commandments from the pulpit. Schoolmasters too, so the manual says, should also be urged to instruct on the Commandments those committed to their care. Luther's manual on Confession contains so many echoes of Wolff's work (or of other Catholic penitential handbooks) that one of Wolff's Protestant editors remarks: "Such agreement is certainly more than a mere chance coincidence," and, further: "It is difficult in view of the great resemblance of thought, and in places even of language, not to assume that the younger man is indebted to his predecessor."[1] However this may be, Wolff's work, though holding no very high place as regards either arrangement or style, clearly expresses the general trend of the Catholic teaching on morality at that time, and refutes anew the unfounded charge that religious instruction for the people was entirely absent.

"We see how mature and keen in many particulars was the moral sense in that much-abused period. . . . The author is not satisfied with merely an outward, pharisaical righteousness, but the spirit is what he everywhere insists on. . . . He also defines righteousness . . . as absolute uprightness of spirit, thankful, devoted love of God and pure charity towards our neighbour, free from all ulterior motive." These words, of the "Leipziger Zeitung" ("Wissenschaftliche Beilage," No. 10, 1896), regarding the Leipzig "Beichtspiegel" of 1495, Falk applies equally to Wolff's handbook for Confession.[2]

This latter instruction dwells particularly on the need of "contrition, sorrow and grief for sin" on the part of the penitent.

[1] F. W. Battenberg, "Beichtbüchlein des Mag. Wolff," Giessen, 1907, pp. 189, 205.

[2] Falk, *ibid.*, p. 13. Falk also quotes (p. 14) a noteworthy observation of Luthmer's ("Zeitschr. für christl. Kunst," 9, p. 5): "The close of the 15th century was the time when the Decalogue, as the starting-point for Confession, was most frequently commentated, described and depicted pictorially. For those unable to read, tables with the Commandments luridly pictured hung in the churches, schools and religious institutions, and the books on this subject were abundantly illustrated with woodcuts."

N. Paulus, in several articles, has furnished superabundant proof, that in those years, which some would have us believe were addicted to the crassest externalism, the need of contrition in Confession was earnestly dwelt upon in German religious writings.[1]

Luther, however, even in the early days of his change, under the influence of a certain distaste and prejudice in favour of his own pet ideas, had conceived an aversion for Confession. Here again his opposition was based on purely personal, psychological grounds. The terrors he had endured in Confession owing to his curious mental constitution, his enmity to all so-called holiness-by-works—leading him to undervalue the Church's ancient institution of Confession—and the steadily growing influence of his prejudices and polemics, alone explain how he descended so often to the most odious and untrue misrepresentations of Confession as practised by the Papists.

What in the depths of his heart he really desired, and what he openly called for, viz. a Confession which should heal the wounds of the soul and, by an enlightened faith, promote moral betterment—that, alas, he himself had destroyed with a violent hand.

In his letter to Frankfurt quoted above he abuses the Catholic system of Confession because it requires the admission of all mortal sins, and calls it " a great and everlasting martyrdom," " trumped up as a good work whereby God may be placated." He calumniates the Catholic past by declaring it did nothing but " count up sins " and that " the insufferable burden, and the impossibility of obeying the Papal law caused such fear and distress to timorous souls that they were driven to despair." And, in order that the most odious charge may not be wanting, he concludes : " This brought in money and goods, so that it became an idol throughout the whole world, but it was no doctrine, examination or exercise leading to the confession and acknowledgment of Christ."[2] The fables which he bolstered

[1] " Die Reue in den deutschen Beichtschriften des ausgehenden MA.," in " Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.," 28, 1904, pp. 1–36. " In den deutschen Erbauungsschriften des ausgehenden MA.," *ibid.*, pp. 440–485. " In den deutschen Sterbebüchlein des ausgehenden MA.," *ibid.*, pp. 682–698.—Cp. also, Luzian Pfleger, " Die Reue in der deutschen Dichtung des MA." (" Wiss. Beil. zur Germania," 1910, Nos. 45–47).

[2] " Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, pp. 566, 568 f. ; Erl. ed., 26^2, pp. 382, 385.

up on certain abuses, of which even the Papal penitentiary was guilty, were only too readily believed by the masses.[1]

Church Music.

In order to enliven the church services Luther greatly favoured congregational singing. Of his important and successful labours in this direction we shall merely say here, that he himself composed canticles instinct with melody and force, which were either set to music by others or sung to olden Catholic tunes, and became hugely popular among Protestants, chiefly because their wording expresses so well the feelings of the assembled congregation. One of Luther's Hymnbooks, with twenty-four hymns composed by himself, appeared in 1524.[2]

Music, particularly religious music, he loved and cherished, yielding himself entirely to the enjoyment of its inspiring and ennobling influence. As a schoolboy he had earned his bread by singing; at the University he delighted his comrades by his playing on the lute; later he never willingly relinquished music, and took care that the hours of recreation should be gladdened by the singing of various motets.[3] Music, he said, dispelled sad thoughts and was a marvellous cure for melancholy. In his Table-Talk he describes the moral influence of music in language truly striking.[4] "My heart overflows and expands to music; it has so often refreshed and delivered me amidst the worst troubles," thus to the musician Senfl at Munich when asking him to compose a motet.[5] He supplied an Introduction in the shape of a poem entitled "Dame Music" to Johann Walther's "The Praise and Prize of the lovely art of Music" (1538). It commences:[6] There can be no ill-will here—Where all sing with voices clear—Hate or envy, wrath or rage,—When sweet strains our minds engage. Being himself conversant with musical composition, he took pleasure in Walther's

[1] Cp. on the abuses of the Penitentiary and for an elucidation of certain misunderstandings, E. Göller, "Die päpstl. Pönitentiarie von ihrem Ursprung bis . . . Pius V.," 2 vols., Rome, 1907–1911.

[2] More on Luther and Hymnology in vol. v., xxxiv., 4.

[3] See Mathesius, "Tischreden," pp. 111, 150, 389: "*egregias cantilenas post cœnam cecinerunt.*" He himself on one occasion sung "*octavo tono*," *ibid.*, p. 332; cp. p. 391.

[4] Cp., e.g., "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 307; "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 148 *seq.*

[5] See vol. ii., p. 171 f. [6] The whole in Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 503.

description of counterpoint and in his ingenious comparison of the sequence of melodies to a troop of boys at play.

Grauert admirably groups together "Luther's poetic talent, the gift of language, which enabled him so to master German, his work for German hymnology, his enthusiastic love of music, of which he well knew the importance as a moral factor, and his familiarity with the higher forms of polyphonic composition." He also remarks quite rightly that these favourable traits had been admitted unreservedly by Johannes Janssen.[1]

2. Emotional Character and Intellectual Gifts

The traits mentioned above could hardly be duly appreciated unless we also took into account certain natural qualities in Luther from which his depth of feeling sprang.

A Catholic has recently called him an "emotional man," and, so far as thereby his great gifts of intellect and will are not called into question, the description may be allowed to stand.[2] Especially is this apparent in his peculiar humour, which cannot fail to charm by its freshness and spontaneity all who know his writings and his Table-Talk, even though his witticisms quite clearly often served to screen his bitter vexation, or to help him to react against depression, and were frequently disfigured by obscenity and malice.[3] It is a more grateful task to observe the deep feeling expressed in his popular treatment of religious topics. Johannes Janssen declares that he finds in him "more than once a depth of religious grasp which reminds one of the days of German mysticism,"[4] while George Evers, in a work otherwise hostile to Luther, admits: "We must acknowledge that a truly Christian credulity peeps out everywhere, and, particularly in the Table-Talk, is so simple and childlike as to appeal to every heart." Evers even adds: "His religious life as pictured there gives the impression of a man of prayer."[5]

[1] Grauert, "Heinrich Denifle,"[2] 1906, p. 7.

[2] "He possessed all the gifts which go to make an emotional man, as is apparent everywhere; depth, however, and true inwardness were not his." A. M. Weiss, "Lutherpsychologie,"[2] p. 223. What he says of Luther's "depth" must be read in the light of what is said in the text above.

[3] See vol. v., xxxi., 5.

[4] Above, p. 244.

[5] Evers, "Martin Luther," 6, p. 701. Further details on Luther's prayers below, p. 274 ff.

The circumstantial and reliable account given by Johann Cochlæus of an interview which he had with Luther at Worms in 1521 gives us a certain glimpse into the latter's feelings at that critical juncture. After holding a lengthy disputation together, the pair withdrew into another room where Cochlæus implored his opponent to admit his errors and to make an end of the scandal he was giving to souls. Both were so much moved that the tears came to their eyes. "I call God to witness," writes Cochlæus, "that I spoke to him faithfully and with absolute conviction." He pointed out to him as a friend how willing the Pope and all his opponents were to forgive him; he was perfectly ready to admit and condemn the abuses in connection with the indulgences against which Luther had protested; his religious apostasy and the revolt of the peasants whom he was leading astray were, however, a different matter. The matter was frankly discussed between the two, partly in German, partly in Latin. Luther finally mastered the storm obviously raging within and brought the conversation to an end by stating that it did not rest with him to undo what had been done, and that greater and more learned men than he were behind it. On bidding him farewell, Cochlæus assured him with honest regret that he would continue the literary feud; Luther, for his part, promised to answer him vigorously.[1]

Luther's mental endowments were great and unique.

Nature had bestowed on him such mental gifts as must astonish all, the more they study his personality. His extraordinary success was due in great part to these rare qualities, which were certainly calculated to make of him a man truly illustrious had he not abused them. His lively reason, quick grasp and ready tongue, his mind, so well stocked with ideas, and, particularly, the inexhaustible fertility of his imagination, allowing him to express himself with such ease and originality, enchanted all who came into contact with him.

Pollich of Mellerstadt, one of the most highly respected Professors of the Wittenberg University, said of Luther, when as yet

[1] The account by Cochlæus, taken from a special print of 1540 "of which sufficient account has hardly been made," in Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 3, p. 174 ff. New edition of the "*Colloqium Cochlæi*," by J. Greving, in "Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation," 4, Hft. 3, Leipzig, 1910.

the latter was scarcely known: "Keep an eye on that young monk, Master Martin Luther, he has a reason so fine and keen as I have not come across in all my life; he will certainly become a man of eminence."[1] Jonas, his friend, assures us that others too, amongst them Lang and Staupitz, admitted they had never known a man of such extraordinary talent.[2] Urban Rhegius, who visited him in 1534, in the report he gives shows himself quite overpowered by Luther's mind and talent: "He is a theologian such as we rarely meet. I have always thought much of Luther, but now I think of him more highly than ever. For now I have seen and heard what cannot be explained in writing to anyone not present. . . . I will tell you how I feel. It is true we all of us write occasionally and expound the Scriptures, but, compared with Luther, we are children and mere schoolboys."[3]

His friends generally stood in a certain awe of his greatness, though, in their case, we can account otherwise for their admiration. Later writers too, even amongst the Catholics, felt in the imposing language of his writings the working of a powerful mind, much as they regretted his abuse of his gifts. "His mind was both sharp and active," such was the opinion of Sforza Pallavicini, the Jesuit author of a famous history of the Council of Trent; "he was made for learned studies and pursued them without fatigue to either mind or body. His learning seemed his greatest possession, and this he was wont to display in his discourse. In him felicity of expression was united with a stormy energy. Thereby he won the applause of those who trust more to appearance than to reality. His talents filled him with a self-reliance which the respect shown him by the masses only intensified."[4] "Luther's mind was a fertile one," he writes elsewhere, "but its fruits were more often sour than ripe, more often abortions of a giant than viable offspring."[5] His alert and too-prolific fancy even endangered his other gifts by putting in the shade his real intellectual endowments. "His imagination," Albert Weiss truly says, "was, next to his will, the most strongly developed of his inner faculties, and as powerful as it was clear. Herein chiefly lies the secret of his power of language."[6]

To his temperamental and intellectual qualities, which undoubtedly stamped his works with the impress of a "giant," we must add his obstinate strength of will and his extraordinary tenacity of purpose.

[1] So Jonas declares in his funeral address on Luther. "Luthers Werke," ed. Walch, 21, p. 362* ff.

[2] *Ibid.* [3] In Uhlhorn, "Urbanus Rhegius," 1861, p. 159 f.

[4] "Storia del Concilio di Trento," 1, 4, Roma, 1664, 1, p. 58. Here we read: "Non essendo povero di letteratura, ne pareva ricchissimo, perchè portava tutto il suo capitale nella punta della lingua."

[5] 6, 10 (i., p. 691); Denifle ("Luther und Luthertum," 1^2, p. 24) calls Luther "not merely talented, but in many points very much so." *Ibid.*, p. xxv., he enumerates Luther's "good natural qualities," which he is ready to prize. [6] "Lutherpsychologie,"[2] p. 225.

Were it possible to separate his will from his aims and means, and to appreciate it apart, then one could scarcely rate it high enough. Thousands, even of the bravest, would have quailed before the difficulties he had to face both without and within his camp. The secret of his success lay simply in his ability to rise superior to every difficulty, thanks to his defiance and power of will. Humanly it is hard to understand how all attacks and defeats only served to embolden him. Protestants have spoken of the "demoniacal greatness" manifest in Luther, have called him a man of "huge proportions and power" in whose "breast two worlds wrestled," and, on account of his "heroic character," have even claimed that history should overlook "the vices proper to heroes."[1]

Among Catholic writers the earlier Döllinger, for all his aversion for Luther's purpose and the weapons he employed, nevertheless says of him: "If such a one is justly to be styled a great man, who, thanks to his mighty gifts and powers, accomplishes great things and brings millions of minds under his sway—then the son of the peasant of Möhra must be reckoned among the great, yea, among the greatest of men."[2] Upon the disputed definition of "greatness" we cannot enter here. (See vol. vi., xl., 1.) Yet, in view of the intellectual gifts lavished on Luther, Döllinger's words are undoubtedly not far away from the mark, particularly when we consider his gigantic capacity for work and the amazing extent of his literary labours, distracted though he was by other cares.

We have already had occasion to give the long list of the works he penned in 1529 and 1530,[3] and we may add some further examples. In 1521, in which year he lost over five weeks in travelling, not to speak of the correspondence and other business which claimed his attention in that exciting period of his life, he still found time to write more than twenty works of varying length which in the Weimar edition cover 985 large octavo pages; he also translated a book by Melanchthon into German, commenced his translation of the Bible and his church Postils. In 1523 he produced no less than twenty-four books and pamphlets, and,

[1] Seeberg, "Luther und Luthertum in der neuesten kath. Beleuchtung" (a reply to Denifle), 1904.

[2] "Luther, eine Skizze," p. 51; "KL."[2] 8, col. 339.

[3] Vol. iii., p. 298 f.; and vol. ii., p. 160.

besides this, his lectures on Deuteronomy (247 pages in the Weimar edition) and a German translation of the whole Pentateuch. He also preached about 150 sermons, planned other works and wrote the usual flood of letters, of which only a few, viz. 112, have been preserved, amongst them being some practically treatises in themselves and which duly appeared in print. Even in 1545, when already quite broken down in health and when two months were spent in travelling, he managed with a last effort, inspired by his deadly hate, to compose even so considerable a book as his "Wider das Bapstum zu Rom vom Teuffel gestifft," as well as other smaller writings and the usual number of private letters, circulars, and memoranda."[1] At the very end he told his friend, the preacher Jacob Probst, that he meant to work without intermission though old and weary, with a failing eyesight and a body racked with pain.

These labours, of which the simple enumeration of his books gives us an inkling, even the most fertile mind could have performed only by utilising every moment of his time and by renouncing all the allurements to distraction and repose. The early hours of the morning found Luther regularly in his study, and, in the evening, after his conversation with his friends, he was wont to betake himself early to bed so as to be able to enjoy that good sleep, without which, he declared, he could not meet the demands made upon him.

That, however, behind all his fiery zeal for work, certain moral influences not of the highest also had a share is obvious from what has been said previously.

3. Intercourse with Friends. The Interior of the former Augustinian Monastery

Hitherto we have been considering the favourable traits in Luther's character as a public man; turning to his quieter life at Wittenberg, we shall find no lack of similar evidences.[2] We must begin by asking impartially whether

[1] Cp. H. Böhmer, "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung,"[2] p. 115.

[2] There is no sufficient ground for charging the earlier Catholic accounts of Luther with having said nothing of his better side. It is true that in self-defence, and following the usual method of controversy, they did insist rather too much on what was objectionable—the Jesuits of the 16th and 17th centuries being no exception to the rule—without

the notorious Table-Talk does not reveal a better side of his character.

The question must be answered in the affirmative by every unprejudiced reader of those notes. Luther's gifts of mind and temperament, his versatility, liveliness of imagination, easy use of Scripture and insight even into worldly matters; further his rare talent of simple narration, and not seldom the very subjects he chooses give a real worth to Luther's Table-Talk, notwithstanding all that may be urged against it. It is accordingly the historian's duty faithfully to portray its better side.

The more favourable side of the Table-Talk.

Any comprehensive judgment on the Table-Talk as a whole is out of the question; with its changing forms and colours and its treatment of the subjects it is altogether too

sufficiently discriminating between what was true and what was false (B. Duhr, S.J., "Gesch. der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge," 1907, p. 681). Luther himself was, however, partly to blame for this, owing to the quantity of unfavourable material he provided. But, after the first heat of battle was over, even in the days of Caspar Ulenberg, the Cologne parish priest, who, in 1589, wrote a biography of Luther, there have always been numbers of Catholic writers ready to admit the good there was in Luther. At the present day appreciative passages abound both in general encyclopædias and in handbooks written for students. To mention some examples, H. Brück ("Lehrb. der KG.") speaks of Luther's "sparkling imagination, his popular eloquence, which was its consequence, and of his indefatigable capacity for work"; also of his "disinterestedness." J. Alzog says ("Universalgesch. der christl. Kirche"): "He did not lack the deeper religious feeling which seeks its satisfaction." J. A. Möhler ("KG.") writes: "He may be compared for his power to the great conquerors of the world; like them, too, he knew no other law than his own will." J. v. Döllinger (as yet still a Catholic) says of him ("KL." [2]), that he was a "sympathetic friend, free from avarice and greed of money," and ever "ready to assist others"; "he possessed undeniably great rhetorical talent in dialectic and a wonderful gift of carrying men away." In Herder's "Konversationslexikon," 5^3 (1905), we read of Luther: "In the circle of his friends . . . he knew how to speak thoughtfully of matters of theology. . . . His family life had its finer side . . . he was a staunch advocate of conjugal fidelity in his sermons and elsewhere. . . . What he taught concerning the dignity of worldly callings was in many instances quite right and true. . . . In the works he intended for edification he gave his followers stimulating food for thought, drawn from the treasure-house of the truths of Christianity and of nature. . . . He promoted a more diligent study of Holy Scripture and the cause of positive theology to much effect. His art of using his native tongue was of great service in furthering the language. His translation of the whole Bible stands as a linguistic monument to him. . . . The powerful hymns he composed are also treasured by the whole Protestant world."

kaleidoscopic. Again, in conjunction with what is good and attractive, frivolous, nay, even offensive and objectionable subjects are dealt with, for which the reader is in no wise prepared.[1]

It is necessary to emphasise the fact—which may be new to some—that to regard the Table-Talk as a hotch-potch of foul sayings is to do it an injustice. Catholics, as a matter of course, are used to finding in anti-Lutheran polemics plentiful quotations from it not at all to Luther's credit; of its better contents, a knowledge of which is of even greater importance in forming an opinion of his character, no hint is contained in this sort of literature. Some are even ignorant that Protestant writers have more than compensated for this undue stress on the unfavourable side of the Table-Talk by the attractive selection they give from its finer parts.

In point of fact the subject of Luther's conversations is, not infrequently, the attributes of God; for instance, His mercy and love; the duties of the faithful towards God and their moral obligations in whatever state of life they be placed; hints to the clergy on the best way to preach or to instruct the young; not to speak of other observations regarding neighbourly charity, the vices of the age and the virtues or faults of great personages of that day, or of the past. Luther was fond of discoursing on subjects which, in his opinion, would prove profitable to those present, though often his object was merely to enliven and amuse the company.

The tone and the choice of his more serious discourses frequently show us that he was not unmindful of the fact, that his words would be heard by others beyond the narrow circle of his private guests; he was aware that what he said was noted down, and not unfrequently requested the reporters to commit this or that to writing, knowing very well that such notes would circulate.[2] At times, however, he seemed to become forgetful of this, and allowed observations to escape him which caused many of his oldest admirers to regret the publication of the Table-Talk. A large number of statements made by him on the spur of the moment must, moreover, not be taken too seriously, for they are either

[1] For the collections of the Table-Talk see vol. iii., p. 218 ff.
[2] See vol. iii., p. 223.

in contradiction with other utterances or are practically explained away elsewhere.

Thus, for instance, in a conversation in the winter of 1542–1543, occur the following words which really do him honour: "God has preserved the Church by means of the schools; they it is that keep the Church standing. Schools are not very imposing as to their exterior, yet they are of the greatest use. It was to the schools that the little boys owed their knowledge of the Paternoster and the Creed, and the Church has been wonderfully preserved by means of the small schools."[1]—Yet, at an earlier date, he had said just the contrary, viz. that before his day the young had been allowed to drift to wreck and ruin, owing to entire lack of instruction.

On certain religious subjects he could speak with deep feeling.[2] Compare, for instance, what he says of Christ's intercourse with His disciples.

"In what a friendly way," Luther remarks, "did He behave towards His disciples! How charming were all His dealings with them! I quite believe what is related of Peter, viz. that, after Christ's Ascension, he was always weeping and wiping his eyes with a handkerchief till they grew quite red; when asked the cause of his grief, he replied, he could not help shedding tears when he remembered the friendly intercourse they had had with Christ the Lord. Christ indeed treats us just as He did His disciples, if only we would but believe it; but our eyes are not open to the fact. It was a real wonder how they [the Apostles] were so altered in mind at Pentecost. Ah, the disciples must have been fine fellows to have been witnesses of such things and to have had such fellowship with Christ the Lord!"[3]

Immediately after this, however, we hear him inveighing against the Pope with statements incredibly false,[4] whilst, just before, in another conversation, he had introduced his favourite error concerning Justification by Faith.[5]

It may suffice to keep to the dozen pages or so[6] from which the above kindlier samples were extracted, to become acquainted with the wealth of good interspersed amongst so much that is worthless, and at the same time to appreciate how lively his mind and his powers of observation still remained even when increasing years and persistent bad health were becoming a burden to him.

As to the way in which his then sayings were handed down, we may state, that, in the winter of 1542–1543, Caspar Heydenreich,

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 311.

[2] Cp. the emotion which accompanied another fine utterance spoken "*ex pleno et accenso corde*" (Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 23). There Luther was speaking of the profundity of the Word of God and of reliance on His Promises. See also below, p. 265.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 309.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 311, with the heading "*Papæ tyrannis.*"

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 310–322.

who had already officiated as pastor of Joachimstal, was present at Luther's table and wrote down these and other remarks as they dropped from the speaker's lips; they were afterwards incorporated in Mathesius' collection. In the original they are partly in Latin, partly in German, and betray not the slightest attempt at polish. The reason that we thus find Latin passages in reports of German conversations is that the reporter, in order to take down more rapidly what he heard, at times made use of shorthand, then only employed for Latin. Others who reported the Table-Talk had recourse to the same device. The consequence is, that, in the recent German editions of the Table-Talk, we find in one and the same conversation some sentences in the Old German Luther actually used, and others in present-day German, the latter being merely translations from the Latin.

After discoursing at length on the fact that schools ought to be carefully cherished for the sake of the coming generation of Church teachers, he says: "The work of the schools is not brilliant in the eyes of the world, but it is of the greatest utility." (No. 609; then follows the praise of the old schools already recorded.)—"Wealth is the most insignificant thing in the world, the meanest gift in God's power to bestow on man. What is it compared with the Word of God? Indeed, what is it compared with bodily endowments, or with beauty, or with the gifts of the soul? and yet people fret so much for it. Material, formal, efficient and final causes here fare badly. For this reason the Almighty usually gives riches to rude donkeys upon whom He bestows nothing else" (611).

Luther relates incidentally that his father Hans, who died at Mansfeld in 1530, when asked on his death-bed whether he believed in the Apostles' Creed, replied: "He would indeed be a scoundrel who refused to believe that." "That," aptly remarked Luther, "is a voice from the old world"; whereupon Melanchthon chimed in: "Happy those who die in the knowledge of Christ as did your [daughter] Magdalene [† Sep. 20, 1542]; the older we grow the more foolish we become. . . . When we grow up we begin to dispute and want to be wise, and yet we are the biggest fools" (615).

According to Luther, God's most grievous wrath then rested on the Jews. They are blinded, pray fanatically and yet are not heard. "Oh, dear God, rather than remain silent do Thou punish us with pestilence, the French disease and whatever other dreadful maladies the soldiers curse. God says: I have stretched out My hands; come, give ear, draw nigh to Me! [The Jews reply]: We won't. [God says]: You have Isaias; hear him. [They scream]: Yah, we will kill him! [God says]: Here is My Son! [They reply]: Out on Him! Hence Our Lord God now treats them as we see. That is how abandoned children fare, who refuse to obey their parents and are therefore deserted by them. No one has ever written concerning this wrath of God, nor is anyone able to do so; no eloquence can plumb the depths of this wrath. O Heavenly Father—[this he said with clasped

hands]—allow us to enjoy the sunshine and permit us not to fall away from the Word ! Just fancy, for fifteen hundred years the Jews have groaned under His Wrath ! And what will be the end of it all ? Alas, there will be a dreadful scene in hell ! " (608).

Against the Jews he was very bitter. It was related at table, that, in spite of the two books Luther had recently published, the Hebrews stood in favour with the Counts of Mansfeld, and, from their synagogue, had even dared to hurl at an Eisleben preacher the opprobrious epithet of Goim. Luther replied that if he were pastor and Court Chaplain there like Cœlius, or even a simple preacher, he would at once resign his post. When it was remarked that the Jews knew how to curry favour with the great, his comment was : " The devil can do much." On being asked whether it would be right to box the ears of a Jew who uttered a blasphemy, he replied, " Certainly ; I for one would smack him on the jaw. Were I able, I would knock him down and stab him in my anger. If it is lawful, according to both the human and the Divine law, to kill a robber, then it is surely even more permissible to slay a blasphemer." To the observation of one of his guests that the Jews boasted, that, of the two, the Christians were the worse usurers, Luther said : " That is quite true. At Leipzigk there are greater usurers than the Jews. But a distinction must be drawn." Among the Jews usury is made the rule, whereas amongst the Christians it is repressed. " We preach against it and are heartily opposed to it ; with them this is not the case " (628).

In a similar strain, in the dozen pages under consideration, he touches on many other instructive subjects, whether connected with questions of the day, or with religion, or the Bible. He portrays with a clear hand the dominant idea of the Book of Job, in comparison with which all the dramatic force of the Greek plays was as nothing (616) ; he expounds the narratives of Christ's Prayer in the Garden of Olives, where He suffered indescribable pains for our sins (626) ; in answer to a query he speaks of the anointing of Our Lord's feet by Magdalene, and observes, referring to the censure drawn from Judas by his avarice : " That is the way of the world and the devil ; what should be blamed is praised, and what should be praised is blamed " (627). What he says of the vast number of the slain, alluded to so frequently in the Old Testament, was probably also called forth by some questioner (612). Amidst this recur new invectives against the Jews and their magic ; never ought we to eat or drink with them (619) ; also against the Turks and their bigotry and unbelief ; the latter resembled the fanatics in that, like them, they refused to doubt their revelations ; this he proved by certain instances (620). He speaks of the strong faith of simple Christians with feeling and not without envy (614). He extols the power of prayer for others, and proves it not merely from Biblical texts and examples, but also from his own experience ; " we, too, prayed Philip back to life. Verily prayer can do much. . . . God does not reward it with a certain, fixed

measure, but with a measure pressed and running over, as He says. . . . A powerful thing is prayer, if only I could believe it, for God has bound and pledged Himself by it" (617).

Dealing with astrology, he demonstrates its folly by a lengthy and very striking argument; when it was objected that the reformation he was carrying out had also been predicted by the stars at the time of his birth, he replied: "Oh no, that is another matter! That is purely the work of God. You will never persuade me otherwise!" (625).

As to practical questions, he speaks of the doings of the Electoral marriage courts in certain cases (621); of severity in the up-bringing of children (624); of the choice of godparents for Baptism (620); of the authority of guardians in the marriage of their wards (613); and of what was required of those who dispensed the Supper (618).

On one occasion, when the conversion of the Jews at the end of the world was being discussed, the "Doctoress" (Catherine) intervened in the conversation with a Biblical quotation, but her contribution (John x. 16) was rejected in a friendly way by Luther as mistaken.

In these pages of the Table-Talk unseemly speeches or expressions such as call for censure elsewhere do not occur, though the Pope and the Papacy are repeatedly made the butt of misrepresentation and abuse (610, 616, 619); as was only to be expected, we find here again Luther's favourite assertion that the Roman doctrine of works is a gross error very harmful to souls (623); in support of his opinion Luther gives a long string of Bible texts.

Apart from the abuse just referred to and some other details these few leaves, taken at haphazard from the Table-Talk, are certainly not discreditable to Luther. Beside these might moreover be placed, as we have already admitted elsewhere, many other pages the contents of which are equally unexceptionable.

It is naturally not the task or duty of Catholic controversialists to fill their works with statements from the Table-Talk such as the above; they would nevertheless do well always to bear in mind that many such favourable utterances occur in Luther's works with which moreover the Protestants are as a rule perfectly familiar. The latter, indeed, who often are acquainted only with these better excerpts from Luther's books, sermons, letters or Table-Talk, are not unnaturally disposed to view with suspicion those writers who bestow undue prominence on unfavourable portions of his works, torn from their context.

Unless Catholic polemics contrive to look at things from their opponents' point of view, their success must always be limited ; short of this they run the risk of being accused of being ignorant of what tells in Luther's favour, or of not giving it due weight. All controversy should in reality be conducted in a friendly spirit, and, in the discussion of Luther, such a spirit joined with a broad-minded appreciation of what is good in the opposite party cannot fail to be productive of happy results. How far Protestants have acted in this spirit is, alas, plain to all who have had dealings with them. There can be no question but that certain excesses perpetrated on the opposite side go far to explain, if not to excuse, the methods adopted by some of the champions of Catholicism.

Kindlier Traits Evinced by Luther.

The great veneration felt for Luther by most of his pupils, particularly by those who were intimate with him, enables us to see the impression his talents made on others. It is, of course, probable that their mental submission to him was in part due to the feeling, that it was an exceptional honour to be accounted friends of a man famous throughout the world and so distinguished by his extraordinary success ; yet it is equally certain that it was his own peculiar charm which caused not merely young students, such as those who noted down the Table-Talk, but even mature and experienced men, to look up to him with respect and affection and voluntarily to subject themselves to his mind and his will. The fact is, in Luther a powerful and domineering talent existed side by side with great familiarity in consorting with others and a natural gift of making himself loved. The unshakable confidence in God on which he and his followers seemed to lean in every reverse they met, perhaps impressed people more than anything else.

" His earnestness," wrote a devoted young follower of his, " is so tempered with gladness and friendliness that one longs to live with him ; it seems as though God wished to demonstrate how blissful and joyous his Evangel is, not merely by his teaching, but even by his conduct." Thus the Swiss student, Johann Kessler, who became acquainted with Luther after his return from the Wartburg.[1] Another voice from the same period enthusiastically

[1] In his " Sabbata," ed. Götzinger in the St. Gallen " Mitteilungen zur vaterländ. Gesch.," 1869 ; new edition, St. Gallen, 1902, p. 76 ff.

extols his friendly ways and his winning speech in his dealings with his pupils, also the power of his words "which cast such a spell over the hearts of his hearers that anyone, who is not made of stone, having once heard him, yearns to hear him again." Thus his disciple Albert Burrer.[1]

Mathesius, one of his busier pupils, declares: "The man was full of grace and the Holy Ghost. Hence all who sought counsel from him as a prophet of God, found what they desired."[2] Often, he remarks, difficult questions from Scripture were submitted to him (in conversation at table) which he answered both plainly and concisely. And if anyone contradicted him he took no offence but skilfully put his gainsayer in the wrong. The Doctor knew so well how to bring in his stories and sayings and apply them at the proper juncture that it was a real pleasure and comfort to listen to him.[3] "Amongst his other great virtues he was very easily-contented, and also extremely kind."[4]

Spangenberg, Aurifaber, Cordatus and other pupils were, so to speak, quite under his spell. Hieronymus Weller, whom Luther frequently sought to encourage in his fits of depression, remarked indeed on one occasion that the difference in age, and his reverence for Luther, prevented him from speaking and chatting as confidentially as he would have liked with the great man.[5] On the other hand, the Humanist, Peter Mosellanus, who was at one time much attached to him and never altogether abandoned his cause, says: "In daily life and in his intercourse with others he is polite and friendly; there is nothing stoical or proud about him; he is affable to everyone. In company he converses cheerfully and pleasantly, is lively and gay, always looks merry, cheerful and amiable however hard pressed by his opponents, so that one may well believe he does not act in such weighty matters without God's assistance."[6]

Melanchthon, particularly in his early days, as our readers already know, expressed great reverence and devotion for Luther. "You know," he wrote to Spalatin during his friend's stay at the Wartburg, "how carefully we must guard this earthen vessel which contains so great a treasure. . . . The earth holds nothing more divine than him."[7] After Luther's death, in spite of the previous misunderstandings, he said of him in a panegyric addressed to the students: "Alas, the chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof, who ruled the Church in these latter years of her existence, has departed."[8]

Luther was often to prove that the strong impression made by his personality was alone able to gain the day in

[1] Burrer's letter, in Baum, "Capito," 1860, p. 83.
[2] "Historien," p. 147.
[3] Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 142, 143.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 153'.
[5] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 510.
[6] In F. S. Keil, "Luthers Lebensumstände," 1, 1764, p. 2. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 243 f.
[7] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 442. Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 322.
[8] "*Vita Lutheri*," in "*Vitæ quattuor reformatorum*," p. 14.

cases of difficulty, to break down opposition and to ensure the successful carrying out of hardy plans. Seldom indeed did those about him offer any objection, for he possessed that gift, so frequently observed in men of strong character, of exercising, in every matter great or small, a kind of suggestive influence over those who approached him. He possessed an inner, unseen power which seemed to triumph over all, . . . even over the claims of truthfulness and logic ;[1] besides this, he was gifted with an imposing presence and an uncanny glance. He was by no means curt in his answers, but spoke freely to everyone in a manner calculated to awaken the confidence and unlock the hearts of his hearers. Of his talkativeness he himself once said : " I don't believe the Emperor [Charles V.] says so much in a year as I do in a day."[2]

His " disinterestedness which led him to care but little about money and worldly goods "[3] increased the respect felt for him and his work. So little did he care about heaping up riches, that, when scolding the Wittenbergers on account of their avarice, he could say that " though poor, he found more pleasure in what was given him for his needs than the rich and opulent amongst them did in their own possessions."[4] So entirely was he absorbed in his public controversy that he paid too little attention to his own requirements, particularly in his bachelor days ; he even relates how, before he took a wife, he had for a whole year not made his bed, or had it made for him, so that his sweat caused it to rot. " I was so weary, overworked all the day, that I threw myself on the bed and knew nothing about it."[5] He was never used to excessive comfort or to indulgence in the finer pleasures of the table. In every respect, in conversation and intercourse with others and in domestic life, he was a lover of simplicity. In this he was ever anxious to set a good example to his fellow-workers.

Although he frequently accepted with gratitude presents

[1] See our remarks above, p. 112 ff., on the way he came to believe in the truth of the falsehoods he so often repeated and even to convince his pupils of it too.

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 283.

[3] Jos. Hundhausen, " Kirche oder Protestantismus," a Catholic work, Mayence, 1883, p. 225.

[4] In a sermon of 1528, " Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 408 f.

[5] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 510.

from the great, yet on occasion he was not above cautioning givers of the danger such gifts involved, when the " eyes of the whole world are upon us."[1] In 1542, when there was a prospect of his receiving from his friend Amsdorf, the new " bishop " of Naumburg, presents out of the estates of the bishopric, he twice wrote to him to refrain from sending him anything, even a single hare, because " our courtly centaurs [the selfish and rapacious nobles] must be given no pretext for venting their glowing hate against us on the trumped-up charge that we were desirous of securing gain through you." " They have gulped down everything without compunction, but still would blame us were we to accept a paltry gift of game. Let them feed in God's or another's [the devil's] name, so long as we are not accused of greed."[2] Döllinger speaks of Luther as " a sympathetic friend, devoid of avarice and greed of money, and a willing helper of others."[3]

He was always ready to assist the poor with open-handed and kindly liberality, and his friends especially, when in trouble or distress, could reckon on his charity.

When his own means were insufficient he sought by word of mouth or by letter to enlist the sympathy of others, of friends in the town, or even of the Elector himself, in the cause of the indigent. On more than one occasion his good nature was unfairly taken advantage of. This, however, did not prevent his pleading for the poor who flocked to Wittenberg from all quarters and were wont to address themselves to him. Thus, for instance, in 1539 we have a note in which he appealed to certain " dear gentlemen " to save a " pious and scholarly youth " from the " pangs of hunger " by furnishing him with 30 Gulden ; he himself was no longer able to afford the gifts he had daily to bestow, though he would be willing, in case of necessity, to contribute half the sum.[4]

Many of the feeble and oppressed experienced his help in the law. He reminds the lawyers how hard it is for the poor to comply with the legal formalities necessary for their protection. On one occasion, when it was a question of the defence of a poor woman, he says : " You know Dr. Martin is not only a theologian and the champion of the

[1] See vol. ii., p. 133.
[2] To Amsdorf, Feb. 6 and 12, 1542, " Briefe," 5, pp. 432, 434.
[3] " Luther, eine Skizze," p. 51 ; " KL.," 8^2, col. 339.
[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 495.

faith, but also an advocate of the poor, who troop to him from every place and corner and demand his aid and his intercession with the authorities, so that he would have enough to do even if no other burden rested on his shoulders. But Dr. Martin loves to serve the poor."[1]

In 1527, when the plague reached Wittenberg, he stayed on in the town with Bugenhagen in order at least to comfort the people by his presence. The University was transferred for the time being to Jena (and then to Schlieben) and the Elector accordingly urged him to migrate to Jena with his wife and family. Luther however insisted on remaining, above all on account of the urgent need of setting an example to his preachers, who were too much preoccupied with the safety of their own families. It was then that he wrote the tract "Ob man fur dem Sterben fliehen muge" (Whether one may flee from death), answering the question in the negative so far as the ministers were concerned. In such dire trouble the flock were more than ever in need of spiritual help; the preachers were to exhort the people to learn diligently from the Word of God how to live and how to die, also, by Confession, reception of the Supper, reconciliation with their neighbours, etc., to "prepare themselves in advance should the Lord knock speedily."[2] He displayed the same courage during the epidemic of the so-called "English sweat," a fever which, in 1529, broke out at Wittenberg, and in other German towns, and carried off many victims. Again in 1538 and in 1539 he braved new outbreaks of the plague at Wittenberg. His wish was, that, in such cases, one or two preachers should be specially appointed to look after those stricken with the malady. "Should the lot fall on me," he says in 1542, "I should not be afraid. I have now been through three pestilences and mixed with some who suffered from it . . . and am none the worse."[3] "God usually protects the ministers of His

[1] To Anton Unruhe, Judge at Torgau, June 13, 1538, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 205 ("Briefwechsel," 11, p. 371).

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 323 ff.; Erl. ed., 317 ff. N. Paulus ("Hist.-pol. Bl.," 133, 1904, p. 201) also points out the "Courage which Luther showed in the time of the plague," also his "liberality, his cheerful, sociable ways, how easily he was contented and how tirelessly he laboured." George Evers ("Martin Luther," 6, p. 6) recognises, amongst many other good qualities, the courage he showed during the plague.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 285.

Word," he writes in 1538, " if one does not run in and out of the inns and lie in the beds ; confessions there is no need to hear, for we bring the Word of Life."[1] The fact that he could boast of having braved the plague and remained at his post naturally tended to increase his influence with his congregation.[2]

He had passed through a severe mental struggle previous to the epidemic of 1529. Only by dint of despairing efforts was he able to overcome his terrors of conscience concerning his doctrine and his own personal salvation. This inner combat so hardened him that he was fearless where others were terrified and fled. Of his own qualms of conscience he wrote to a friend in April, 1529 : If it be an apostolic gift to fight with devils and to lie frequently at the point of death, then he was indeed in this a very Peter or Paul, however much he might lack the other apostolic characters.[3] Here we have the idea of his Divine calling, always most to the front in times of danger, which both strengthens him and enables him to inspire others with a little of his own confidence. " I and Bugenhagen alone remain here," he wrote during the days of the plague, " but we are not alone, for Christ is with us and will triumph in us and shelter us from Satan, as we hope and trust."[4]

We already are acquainted with some of his admissions of his own weakness and acknowledgments of the greater gifts and achievements of others—confessions which have been extolled as a proof of his real humility.

" I have no such foolish humility," so he says, " as to wish to deny the gifts God has bestowed on me. In myself I have indeed enough and more than enough to humble me and teach me that I am nothing. In God, however, we may well pride ourselves, and rejoice and glory in His gifts and extol them, as I myself do on account of my German Psalter ; for I studied the Psalter, thanks be to God, with great fruit ; but all to the honour and glory of God to Whom be praise for ever and ever." This he wrote to Eobanus Hessus, the poet, in a high-flown letter thanking him for translating the German Psalter into excellent Latin.[5]

[1] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 188.
[2] " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 31.
[3] To Justus Jonas, April 19, 1529, " Briefwechsel," 7, p. 87.
[4] To Nicholas Hausmann, Aug. 20, 1527, " Briefwechsel," 6, p. 77.
[5] Aug. 1, 1537, " Briefwechsel," 11, p. 254.

Of his own virtues or sinfulness he preferred to speak humorously, as his manner was. Thus, he says, for instance, in 1526, in his suppressed "Widder den Radschlag der Meintzischen Pfafferey," that "he had not defiled any man's wife or child," "had not robbed anyone of his goods . . . nor murdered or assaulted anyone or given help or counsel thereto"; his sin consisted in "not pulling a long face but in insisting on being merry"; also in eating meat on forbidden days. People might defame his life, but he was not going to heed "the dirty hog-snouts."[1]

His statements belittling his own powers and achievements, coming from a man whose apparently overmastering self-confidence had, from the beginning, prepossessed so many of his followers in his favour, afford a subject for psychological study. He seems the more ready to give full play to his confidence the more he feels his weakness face to face with the menace of danger, and the more he experiences in the depths of his soul the raging of doubts which he attributes to the devil.

In the humble admissions he makes he never conceals how much he stands in need of assistance. He does not hide from himself the fact that he dreads outward troubles, and is deficient in strong and exalted virtue. But side by side with his faults, he is fond of gazing on and extolling God's gifts in his person. His peculiar form of humility, his prayer and his trust in God find expression in certain utterances and experiences, on which no judgment can be passed until we have before us a larger selection of them, particularly of such as seem to be less premeditated.

Prayer and Confidence in God.

Luther's strangely undaunted confidence and the personal nature of his reliance on God's help form part of his mental physiognomy.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 26. It may be remarked incidentally that possibly Luther was not aware, that, not long before, the people of Wittenberg, though no longer Catholic, had been shocked at his eating meat on fast days. In 1523 the people, who still kept the old custom of the Church, as a traveller remarks, were disposed to regard the overflow of the Elbe as Heaven's judgment on Luther's and his preachers' laxity in the matter. See the account of Bishop Dantiscus, of Ermeland, who visited Wittenberg in that year, in Hipler, "Kopernikus und Luther," Braunsberg, 1868, p. 72: "I heard from the country people on my way much abuse and many execrations of Luther and his co-religionists," etc.

He sees around him much distress and corruption and exclaims: "Alas, we are living outwardly under the empire of the devil, hence we can neither see nor hear anything good from without." And yet, he proceeds in his usual forced tone, "inwardly we are living in the kingdom of Christ, where we behold God's glory and His grace! For of Christ it is said: 'Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies.'" "Hatred is our reward in this world." "Our reward is excessive considering the insignificance of the service we render Christ. But what is the world, its anger, or its prince? A smoke that vanishes, a bubble that bursts, such is everything that is opposed to the Lord Whom we serve and Who works in us." With these words, so expressive of his determination, he directs his trusted pupil, Conrad Cordatus, to enter courageously upon the office of preacher at Stendal in the March.[1]

Again and again he seeks to reanimate his faith and confidence by calling to mind not merely God's faithfulness to His promises, but also his own personal "sufferings" and "temptations," the only escape from which, as he believed, lay in the most obstinate and presumptuous belief in his cause, and in the conviction that God was constantly intervening in his favour.

"Not only from Holy Scripture," he said in a conversation in 1540, "but also from my violent inner combats and temptations have I learnt that Christ is God incarnate, and that there is a Trinity. I now know it even better from experience than by faith that these articles are true. For in our greatest temptations nothing can help us but the assurance that Christ became man and is now our intercessor at the right hand of the Father. There is nothing that excites our confidence to such a degree. . . . God, too, has championed this article from the beginning of the world against countless heretics, and even to-day defends it against Turk and Pope; He incessantly confirms it by miracles and permits us to call His Son, the Son of God and true God, and grants all that we ask in Christ's name. For what else has saved us even till the present day in so many perils but prayer to Christ? Whoever says it is Master Philip's and my doing, lies. It is God Who does it for Christ's sake. . . . Therefore we hold fast to these articles in spite of the objections of reason. They have remained and will continue."[2]

Luther often had recourse to prayer, especially when he found himself in difficulty, or in an awkward situation from which he could see no escape; in his letters he also as a rule asks for prayers for himself and for the common cause of the new Evangel. It is impossible to take such requests as a mere formality; his way of making them is usually so full of feeling that they must have been meant in earnest.

In 1534 he wrote a special instruction for the simple and

[1] Letter of Dec. 3, 1544, "Briefe," p. 702.
[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 94.

unlearned on the way to pray.[1] Many parts of this booklet recall the teaching of the great masters of prayer, though unfortunately it is imbued with his peculiar tenets.

He urges people to pray fervently against "the idolatry of the Turk, of the Pope, of all false teachers and devil's snares"; he also mocks at the prayers of the "parsons and monks,"[2] unable to refrain from his bitter polemics even in an otherwise edifying work. Yet the body of the booklet teaches quite accurately, in a fashion recalling the directions given by St. Ignatius, how the Our Father and other daily prayers may be devoutly recited, with pauses after the various petitions or words, so as to form a sort of meditation. He himself, so he assures his readers, was in the habit of "sucking" in this way at the Paternoster, and was also fond of occupying himself with a similar prayerful analysis of the Psalter.

His regular daily prayer he says elsewhere was the Our Father, the Creed and the other usual formulas.[3] "I have daily to do violence to myself in order to pray," he remarked to his friends, "and I am satisfied to repeat when I go to bed the Ten Commandments, the Our Father and then a verse or two; thinking over them I fall asleep."[4] "The Our Father is my prayer, I pray this and sometimes intermingle with it something from the Psalms, so as to put to shame the vain scoffers and false teachers."

It must not be overlooked, however, that on extraordinary occasions, when his hatred of the Papacy was more than usually strong or when troubles pressed, his prayer was apt to assume strange forms. His abomination for the Pope found vent, as he repeatedly tells us, in his maledictory Paternoster.[5] When in great fear and anxiety concerning Melanchthon, who lay sick at Weimar, he, to use his own quaint phraseology, "threw down his tools before our God," to compel Him, as it were, to render assistance. Another such attempt to do violence to God is the purport of a prayer uttered in dejection during his stay in the fortress of Coburg, which Veit Dietrich, who overheard it, gives us in what he states were Luther's own words: "I know that Thou art Our God and Father; hence I am certain Thou wilt put to shame all those who persecute Thy children. Shouldst Thou not do so, there will be as much danger for Thee as for us. This is Thy cause, and we only took it up because we knew Thou wouldst defend it," etc.[6] This intimate friend of Luther's also

[1] "Einfeltige Weise zu beten," "Werke," Erl. ed., 23, p. 215 ff.

[2] Pp. 217, 221 f. The booklet was dedicated to Master Peter Balbier. This master, after having stabbed in anger a foot-soldier, was sentenced to death. Luther's intercession procured the commutation of the sentence into one of banishment.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 6, "Tischreden." The whole section in question, "Tischreden vom Gebete," really belongs here.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 28. [5] Cp. *ibid.*, p. 24, and above, vol. iii., p. 437.

[6] Dietrich to Melanchthon, June 30, 1530, "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 159. Cp. vol. iii., p. 162, his prayer for F. Myconius who was sick, which concludes: "My will be done. Amen."

tells us, that, in those anxious days, Luther's conversations concerning God and his hopes for the future bore an even deeper stamp than usual of sincerity and depth of feeling. Dietrich was one of Luther's most passionately devoted pupils.

"Ah, prayer can do much," such are Luther's words in one of the numerous passages of the Table-Talk, where he recommends its use. "By prayer many are saved, even now, just as we ourselves prayed Philip back to life."[1]

"It is impossible," he says, "that God should not answer the prayer of faith; that He does not always do so is another matter. God does not give according to a prescribed measure, but heaped up and shaken down, as He says. . . . Hence James says (v. 16): 'Pray one for another,' etc. 'The continual prayer of a just man availeth much.' That is one of the best verses in his Epistle. Prayer is a powerful thing."[2]

Anyone who has followed Luther's development and understands his character will know where to find the key to these remarkable, and at first sight puzzling, declarations of trust in God and zeal in prayer.

When once the herald of the new religion had contrived to persuade himself of his Divine call, such blindly confident prayer and trust in God no longer involve anything wonderful. His utterances, undoubtedly, have a good side, for instance, his frank admission of his weakness, of his want of virtue and of the parlous condition of his cause, should God forsake it All his difficulties he casts into the lap of the Almighty and of Christ, in the true Divine sonship of whom he declares he believes firmly. It must, however, strike anyone who examines his prayers that he never once expresses the idea which should accompany all true prayer, viz. resignation into the hands of God and entire willingness to follow Him, to go forward, or turn back whithersoever God wills; never do we find him imploring light so as to know whether the course he is pursuing and the work he has undertaken is indeed right and pleasing to God. On the contrary, in his prayers, in his thoughts and amidst all his inner conflicts, he resolutely sets aside as out of the question any idea of changing the religious attitude he has once assumed.[3] All his striving is directed towards this one end, viz. that God will vouchsafe to further his cause and grant him victory. He, as it were, foists his cause on Heaven.

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 315. [2] *Ibid.*.

[3] For more on this subject see vol. v., xxxii., 5. We see this even in his prayers at the Wartburg.

Hence there is lacking a property imperatively demanded by prayer, viz. that holy indifference and readiness to serve God in the way pleasing to Him to which the Psalmist alludes when he says : " Teach me to do Thy Will, O Lord."

The dominating idea which both animates his confidence and gives it its peculiar stamp, also furnishes him with a sword against the Papacy, with which he lays about him all the more vigorously the more fervently he prays. In praying he blows into a flame his hatred of all who stand up for the ancient Church ; in his prayers he seems to find all the monstrous accusations he intends to hurl against her. Yet he himself elsewhere reminds his hearers, that, as a preparation for prayer, they must put away all bad feeling, since our Lord warns the man who is at variance with his brother first to be reconciled to him before coming with his offering. Luther also impresses on the monks and clergy that they must not pray for what is displeasing to God . . . for instance, for strength to fulfil their obligation of celibacy or their vows.—Might they not justly have retorted that he, too, should not insist so blindly that God should establish his work? And might not the fanatics and Anabaptists have urged a *tu quoque* against him when he accused them of spiritual pride and blind presumption because of their fervent prayers ?

We shall not go out of our way to repeat again what we have already said of his pseudo-mysticism. But in order to understand rightly Luther's prayers and trustfulness, so frequently reminiscent of the best men of the Catholic past, it is necessary to bear in mind his peculiar mystic leanings.

Other Personal Traits. His Family Life.

Luther was able to combine in a remarkable manner his pseudo-mysticism with practical and sober common sense.

Where it is not a question of his Divine mission, of the rights of the new Evangel or of politics—of which by nature he was unfitted to judge—we usually find him eminently practical in his views. His intercourse with others was characterised by simplicity and directness, and the tone of his conversation was both vigorous and original. It was most fortunate for him that his practical insight into things so soon enabled him to detect the exaggeration and peril of

the movement set on foot by the fanatics. Had he been as incautious as they, the State authorities would soon have crushed his plans. This he clearly perceived from the very outset of the movement. Something similar, though on a smaller scale, happened later in the case of the Antinomians. Luther was opposed to such extravagance, and, when friendly admonition proved of no avail, was perfectly ready to resort to force. Whether, from his own standpoint, he was in a position to set matters straight in the case of either of the two movements is another question; the truth is that his standpoint had suspiciously much in common with both. At any rate his encounter with the fanatics taught him to lay much less stress than formerly on the "Spirit," and to insist more on the outward Word and the preaching of the "Evangel."

It must also be noted, that, though accustomed to go forward bravely and beat down all difficulties by main strength, yet in many instances he was quite open to accommodate himself to circumstances, and to yield in the interests of his cause, displaying likewise considerable ingenuity in the choice of the means to be employed. We have already had occasion more than once to see that he was by no means deficient in the wisdom of the serpent. He knew how to give favourably disposed Princes astute advice, particularly as to how they might best encourage and promote the new Church system. To settle their quarrels and to restore concord among them he had recourse sometimes to fiery and even gross language, sometimes to more diplomatic measures. When the Elector and the Duke of Saxony became estranged by the Wurzen quarrel Luther frankly advised the former to give way, and jestingly added that sometimes there might be good reason to "light a couple of tapers at the devil's altar."

He did not, however, possess any talent as an organiser and was, generally speaking, a very imperfect judge of the social conditions of his time. (See vol. vi., xxxv.)

Heinrich Böhmer remarks justly: "Luther was no organiser. Not that he was devoid of interest in or comprehension for the practical needs of life. He was neither a secluded scholar nor a stiff-necked pedant. . . . His practical vein, though strong enough to enable him readily to detect the weak spot in the proposals and creations of

others, was, however, not equal to any independent, creative and efficient action. However bold, energetic and original as a thinker and writer, as an organiser he was clumsy, diffident and poor in ideas. In this domain he is entirely lacking in initiative, decision and, above all, in any theory he could call his own." "His regulations for public worship are no new creation but, more often than not, merely the old, Catholic ones, reduced and arranged to meet the needs of the evangelical congregation. . . . Where he is original he not seldom ceases to be practical. For instance, his extraordinary proposal that the Latin service should be retained for the benefit and edification of those familiar with the language, and his regret that it was no longer possible to arrange a service in Greek or Hebrew, can scarcely be characterised as anything but a professor's whim."[1]

His domestic life, owing to the simplicity, frugality and industry which reigned there, presents the picture of an unpretentious family home.[2]

With Catherine Bora and the children she bore him, he

[1] "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung,"[1] p. 130 f. In the second edition the closing chapter containing these passages is omitted. The comparison with Calvin made by Böhmer in this same chapter on Luther's talent for organisation, is also worthy of notice. "At that time Luther hardly had his equal as pastor, preacher and writer, but, unlike Calvin, he was no born organiser or church-founder. Hence, as soon as he was confronted with the great problem how to organise the evangelical movement now becoming more and more powerful, he ceased to be the one leader and commander of the Reformation. It is true he always remained the supreme authority to his own followers; he reigned indeed, but did not govern; he no longer inspired, instructed or guided his fellow-workers individually. In this respect, also, Calvin was his exact opposite. His position at the outset was incomparably more humble than that of Luther. Yet his reputation grew constantly, till Church and State in Geneva unhesitatingly obeyed him, whilst his sphere of action went on extending till his very death, till finally it embraced the greater part of Western Europe" (p. 131 f.). "Down to the year 1689, nay, down to the 19th century, the nations of the West were still engaged in the solution of the political problems with which Luther's reform had confronted them. For these Luther himself had but slight comprehension. If anything, he rendered their solution more difficult. He, however, took more interest in the legal reforms which had become necessary in consequence of his undertaking" (p. 136).

[2] "Luther's domestic life displays, as a whole, a not unpleasant picture, and its description would form the kindliest portion of a life which really does not offer much that is pleasing." Thus Georg Evers, "Martin Luther," 6, p. 1.

led—apart from the disturbances arising from his outward controversies and inward combats—a regular life conducive to his labours. His relations with his life's partner, who was absorbed in the management of the little household, were, so it would appear, never seriously disturbed; he was as devoted to her as she was to him, striving as she did to serve him and to lighten his cares. As to her failings, viz. a certain haughtiness and masterfulness, he winked at them.

In his will dated Jan. 6, 1542, he gives, as follows, his reason for leaving everything to his "beloved and faithful wife Catherine": "I do this first because she, as a pious, faithful and honourable wife, has always held me dear and in honour and, by God's blessing, bore me and brought up five children, who are still alive and whom may God long preserve."[1]

Incidentally he praises her complacency and says that she had served him not only like a wife but like a maid. It is true, however, he says elsewhere: "Had I to marry another, I should hew myself an obedient wife out of stone, for I despair of any woman's obedience."[2]

His last letters to Bora attest great mutual confidence, even though he does just hint in his usual joking way at their common faults: "I think, that, had you been here, you would also have advised us to do this, so that then for once we should have followed your advice." "To my well-beloved housewife Catherine Lutheress, Doctoress, Zulsdorferess, pork-butcheress and whatever else she may be. Grace to you and peace in Christ and my poor old love. . . . I commend to God's keeping you and all the household; greet all the guests. [Signed] M. L., your old sweetheart." Writing to his wife who was so anxious about him, he says: "You want to undertake the care of your God just as though He were not almighty and able to create ten Dr. Martins. . . . Let Master Philip read this letter, for I have not had time to write to him; console yourself with this, that I would be with you were I able, as you know, and as he perhaps also knows from experience with his own wife, and understands it all perfectly." "We are very grateful to you for your great anxiety that prevents you from sleeping. . . . Do you pray and leave the rest to God. It is written: 'Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee' (Psalm lv.)."[3]

His humour helped to tide him over any minor annoyances for which Catherine and the inmates of his house were responsible. He preferred to oppose the shield of jest to Catherine's obstinacy, to her feminine desire to interfere in business that was not hers, as well as to her jealous rule in matters pertaining to the management of the household. When in his letters he addresses

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. 2 f. [2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 487.
[3] Letters of Jan. 25 to Feb. 14, 1546, "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, pp. 149, 151–154.

her as "Lord Katey," and so forth, his object was to reprove her gently for that imperiousness under which he himself had sometimes to smart. We learn from outside sources that her interference was particularly troublesome to others at the time of Luther's conflict with the lawyers on the validity of clandestine marriages, when his wife's friendly interest in certain couples concerned displayed itself in loud and over-zealous advocacy of Luther's view of the question. It was then that Cruciger, the Wittenberg theologian, described her as the "firebrand in Luther's house."[1]

He was not merely unable to accustom himself to the humdrum occupations connected with household management, but the annoyance it entailed was so repugnant to him that in 1538 he dissuaded a preacher who wished to marry a second time, telling him that "the management of a family is in our day the most troublesome thing on earth, so that, knowing the wickedness of the world, were I a young man I would rather die than again become a married man, even though, after my Katey, a queen were offered me in marriage."[2] Evidently he must have found something to regret.

Both took their share in the troublesome and unpretentious work of educating and instructing the children. Luther rightly extols such labours as great and meritorious in God's sight, just as he frequently describes the seemingly lowly callings, which, in the eyes of the world, are of no account, e.g. marriage, as ennobled by God when performed by pious Christians in accordance with His Will and to the benefit of body and soul. (Above, p. 142 f.)

By means of a fairly well-ordered division of the day he found time, in the intervals of the demands made by his domestic duties, to devote long hours to the multifarious and exhausting labours of which we know something. Self-denial in the interests of the cause he had espoused, renunciation of ease and enjoyment so as better to serve an end for which he was impassioned, disregard even of the pressing claims of health—all this is not easily to be matched in any other writer of eminence and talent occupying so historic a position in public life. Luther, plagued as he was by extraneous difficulties, with his professorship, his pulpit and his care for souls, seemed to revolve the wheel of time. Without unheard-of energy and a fiery, overmastering

[1] "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 314: "*Fax domestica.*" The cause of Caspar Beier, the clandestinely married student, with regard to which she fanned the flames of Luther's anger, was, according to Cruciger, "none of the best," Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, pp. 687, 571, n. 1, and p. 569 f.

[2] To Bernard v. Dölen, Aug. 31, 1538, "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 398.

enthusiasm for the cause his achievements would indeed be incomprehensible.

The Catholic, however, when contemplating these traits so far as they redound to Luther's credit must deeply regret, that such energy was not employed in a well-ordered amelioration of the ecclesiastical system on the basis of the true Christian doctrine and in harmony with the authority divinely appointed. If he considers these favourable sides of Luther's character with befitting broad-mindedness, his grief can only deepen at the action, characterised by such perversity and contradiction, by which Luther sought utterly to destroy the existing Church and her faith as revealed and handed down.

CHAPTER XXVI

LUTHER'S MODE OF CONTROVERSY A COUNTERPART OF HIS SOUL

1. Luther's Anger. His Attitude towards the Jews, the Lawyers and the Princes

WHAT above all strikes one in Luther's mode of controversy is his utter unrestraint in his scolding and abuse. Particularly remarkable, especially in his later years, is the language which he has in readiness for two groups of foes, viz. for Jews and Lawyers; then, again, we have the invective which, throughout his career, he was fond of hurling at such Princes and scholars as did not submit to his teaching.

As, in what follows, and in studying the psychology of his anti-Papal abuse, we shall have again occasion to encounter unpleasant passages, we may well make our own the words of Sir Thomas More in his "*Responsio ad convitia Lutheri*," where he trounces Luther for his handling of Henry VIII.: "The gentle reader must forgive me if much that occurs offends his feelings. Nothing has been more painful to me than to be compelled to pour such things into decent ears. The only other alternative would, however, have been to leave the unclean book untouched."[1]

The Jews.

In his earlier days Luther had been more friendly towards the Jews, and had even cherished the childish hope that many of them would embrace the new Evangel and help him in his warfare against the Papal Antichrist. When this failed to come about Luther became more and more angered with their blasphemy against Christ, their art of seducing the faithful and their cunning literary attacks on Christian doctrine. He was also greatly vexed because his Elector, in spite of having, in 1536, ordered all Jews to leave the country,

[1] "Opp.," Lovanii, 1566, f. 116'.

nevertheless, in 1538, granted them a conditional permit to travel through it; he was still more exasperated with Ferdinand the German King who had curtailed the disabilities of the Jews. Luther's opinion was that the only thing to do was to break their pride; he now relinquished all hope of convincing any large number of them of the truth of Christianity; even the biblical statements, according to which the Jews were to be converted before the end of the world, appeared to him to have been shorn of their value.[1]

Hence Luther was, above all, desirous of proving to the faithful that the objections brought forward by the Jews against Christian doctrine and their interpretation of the Old Testament so as to exclude the Christian Messias were all wrong. This he did in three writings which followed each other at short intervals: "Von den Jüden und jren Lügen," "Vom Schem Hamphoras," both dating from 1542, and "Von den letzten Worten Davids" (1543). Owing to his indignation these writings are no mere works of instruction, but in parts are crammed with libel and scurrilous abuse.[2]

In the first of these tracts, for instance, he voices as follows his opinion of the religious learning of the Hebrews: "This passage [the Ten Commandments] is far above the comprehension of the blind and hardened Jews, and to discourse to them on it would be as useless as preaching the Gospel to a pig. They cannot grasp the nature of God's law, much less do they know how to keep it." "Their boast of following the external Mosaic ordinances whilst disobeying the Ten Commandments, fits the Jews just as well as ornaments do an evil woman"; "yet clothes, adornments, garlands, jewels would serve far better to deck the sow that wallows in the mire than a strumpet."[3]

One point which well illustrates his anti-Semitism is the Talmud-Bible he invents as best suited to them: "That Bible only should you explore which lies concealed beneath the sow's tail; the letters that drop from it you are free to eat and drink; that is the best Bible for prophets who trample under foot and rend in so swinish a manner the Word of the Divine Majesty which ought to be listened to with all respect, with trembling and with joy." "Do they fancy that we are clods and wooden blocks like themselves, the rude, ignorant donkeys? . . . Hence, gentle Christian, beware of the Jews, for this book will show you that God's anger has delivered them over to the devil."[4]

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 316.

[2] Cp. Reinhold Lewin, "Luthers Stellung zu den Jüden" ("N. Stud. zur Gesch. der Theol. und Kirche," 10), 1911.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 135.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 177 f.

The figure of the sow's tail pleased him so well that he again used it later in the same year in his "Vom Schem Hamphoras." There he alludes to the piece of sculpture which had originally supplied him with the idea: "Here, at Wittenberg, outside our parish church there is a sow chiselled in the stone; under her are piglets and little Jews all sucking; behind the sow stands a Rabbi, who lifts, with his right hand the sow's hind leg and with his left her tail, and is intently engaged poring over the Talmud under the sow's tail, as though he wished to read and bring to light something especially clever. That is a real image of Schem Hamphoras. . . . For of the sham wise man we Germans say: Where did he read that? To speak coarsely, in the rear parts of a sow."[1]

The "devil" also is drawn into the fray the better to enable Luther to vent his ire against the Jews. At the end of the passage just quoted he says: "For the devil has entered into the Jews and holds them captive so that perforce they do his will, as St. Paul says, mocking, defaming, abusing and cursing God and everything that is His. . . . The devil plays with them to their eternal damnation."[2]—And elsewhere: "Verily a hopeless, wicked, venomous and devilish thing is the existence of these Jews, who for fourteen hundred years have been, and still are, our pest, torment and misfortune. In fine, they are just devils and nothing more, with no feeling of humanity for us heathen. This they learn from their Rabbis in those devils' aeries which are their schools."[3]—"They are a brood of vipers and the children of the devil, and are as kindly disposed to us as is the devil their father."[4]—"The Turk and the other heathen do not suffer from them what we Christians do from these malignant snakes and imps. . . . Whoever would like to cherish such adders and puny devils—who are the worst enemies of Christ and of us all—to befriend them and do them honour simply in order to be cheated, plundered, robbed, disgraced and forced to howl and curse and suffer every kind of evil, to him I would commend these Jews. And if this be not enough let him tell the Jew to use his mouth as a privy, or else crawl into the Jew's hind parts and there worship the holy thing, so as afterwards to be able to boast of having been merciful, and of having helped the devil and his progeny to blaspheme our dear Lord."[5] The last clause would appear to have been aimed at the Counts of Mansfeld, who had allowed a large number of Jews to settle in Eisleben, Luther's birthplace.

The temporal happiness which the Jews looked for under the reign of their Messias, Luther graphically compares to the felicity of a sow: "For the sow lies as it were on a feather-bed whether in the street or on the manure-heap; she rests secure, grunts contentedly, sleeps soundly, fears neither lord nor king, neither death nor hell, neither devil nor Divine anger. . . . She has no thought of death until it is upon her. . . . Of what use would

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 298. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 242. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 244 f. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 244 f.

the Jews' Messias be to me if he could not help poor me against this great and horrible dread and misfortune [the fear of death], nor make my life a tenth part as happy as that of the sow ? I would much rather say : Dear God Almighty, keep Your Messias for Yourself, or give him to those who want him ; as for me, change me into a sow. For it is better to be a live pig than a man who is everlastingly dying."[1]

Such passages as the above are frequently to be met with in Luther's writings against the Jews. In them his object plainly was to confute the misinterpretation of the Bible and the scoffing objections to which Jewish scholars were given. Yet so utterly ungovernable was the author's passion that it spoiled the execution of his noble task. He scarcely knew how to conduct a controversy without introducing sows, devils and such like.

Was it really to Luther's credit that the sty should loom so large in his struggle with his foes ?

Duke George he scolds as the " Dresden pig," and Dr. Eck as " Pig-Eck " ; the latter Luther promises to answer in such a way " that the sow's belly shall not be too much inflated."[2] The Bishops of the Council of Constance who burnt Hus are " boars " ; the " bristles of their backs rise on end and they whet their snouts."[3] Erasmus " carries within him a sow from the herd of Epicurus."[4] The learned Catholics of the Universities are hogs and donkeys decked out in finery, whom God has sent to punish us ; these " devils' masks, the monks and learned spectres, from the Schools we have endowed with such huge wealth, many of the doctors, preachers, masters, priests and friars are big, coarse, corpulent donkeys, decked out with hoods red and brown, like the market sow in her glass beads and tinsel chains."[5]

The same simile is, of course, employed even more frequently of the peasants. " To-day the peasants are the merest hogs, whilst the people of position, who once prided themselves on being bucks, are beginning to copy them."[6]—The Papists have " stamped the married state under foot " ; their clergy are " like pigs in the fattening-pen," " they wallow in filth like the pig in his sty."[7]—The Papists are fed up by their literary men, as befits such pigs as they. " Eat, piggies, eat ! This is good for you."[8]—We Germans are " hopeless pigs."[9]

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 261. Cp. vol., iii., p. 289 f.
[2] " Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 271 ; Erl. ed., 27, p. 206.
[3] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 65, p. 79. [4] See vol. ii., p. 280.
[5] " Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 50 f. ; Erl. ed., 22, p. 196.
[6] Cordatus, " Tagebuch," p. 137.
[7] " Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 306 ; Erl. ed., 40, p. 250 f.
[8] To Caspar Müller, March 18, 1535 ; " Briefwechsel," 10, p. 137.
[9] " Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 149 ; Erl. ed., 30, p. 68. See above, vol. iii., 93 f.

Henry of Brunswick is "as expert in Holy Writ as a sow is on the harp." Let him and his Papists confess that they are "verily the devil's whore-church."[1] "You should not write a book," Luther tells him, "until you have heard an old sow s——; then you should open your jaws and say: Thank you, lovely nightingale, now I have the text I want. Stick to it; it will look fine printed in a book against the Scripturists and the Elector; but have it done at Wolfenbüttel. Oh, how they will have to hold their noses!"[2]

Another favourite image, which usually accompanies the sow, is provided by the donkey. Of Clement VII. and one of his Bulls Luther says: "The donkey pitched his bray too high and thought the Germans would not notice it."[3] Of Emser and the Catholic Professors he writes: "Were I ignorant of logic and philosophy you rude asses would be after setting yourselves up as logicians and philosophers, though you know as much about the business as a donkey does about music."[4] Of Alveld the Franciscan he says: "The donkey does not understand music, he must rather be given thistles."[5] The fanatics too, naturally, could not expect to escape. All that Luther says of heavenly things is wasted upon them. "They understand it as little as the donkey does the Psalter."[6]

The devil, however, plays the chief part. Luther's considered judgment on the Zwinglians, for instance, is, that they are "soul-cannibals and soul-assassins," are "endeviled, devilish, yea, ultra-devilish and possessed of blasphemous hearts and lying lips."[7]

The Lawyers.

Luther's aversion for the "Jurists" grew yearly more intense. His chief complaint against them was that they kept to the Canon Law and put hindrances in his way. Their standpoint, however, as regards Canon Law was not without justification. "Any downright abrogation of Canon Law as a whole was out of the question. The law as then practised, not only in the ecclesiastical but even in the secular courts, was too much bound up with Canon Law; when it was discarded, for instance, in the matrimonial cases, dire legal complications threatened throughout the whole of the German Empire."[8] To this Luther's eyes were not sufficiently open.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 56 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[3] *Ibid.*, 25^1, p. 192.
[4] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 7, p. 676; Erl. ed., 27, p. 292.
[5] *Ibid.*, 6, p. 302=27, p. 110.
[6] *Ibid.*, 26, p. 351=30, p. 224.
[7] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 32, p. 404.
[8] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 469.

His crusade against the validity of clandestine engagements which he entered upon in opposition to his friend and co-religionist, Hieronymus Schurf, his colleague in the faculty of jurisprudence at the University of Wittenberg, was merely one episode in his resistance to those who represented legalism as then established.

In another and wider sphere his relations with those lawyers, who were the advisers at the Court of his Elector and the other Princes, became more strained. This was as a result of their having a hand in the ordering of Church business. Here again his action was scarcely logical, for he himself, forced by circumstances, had handed over to the State the outward guidance of the Church; that the statesmen would intervene and settle matters according to their own ideas was but natural; and if their way of looking at things failed to agree with Luther's, this was only what might have been foreseen all along.

In a conference with Melanchthon, Amsdorf and others in Dec., 1538, he complained bitterly of the lawyers and of the "misery of the theologians who were attacked on all sides, especially by the mighty." To Melchior Kling, a lawyer who was present, he said: "You jurists have a finger in this and are playing us tricks; I advise you to cease and come to the assistance of the nobles. If the theologians fall, that will be the end of the jurists too." "Do not worry us," he repeated, "or you will be paid out." "Had he ten sons, he would take mighty good care that not one was brought up to be a lawyer." "You jurists stand as much in need of a Luther as the theologians did." "The lawyer is a foe of Christ; he extols the righteousness of works. If there should be one amongst them who knows better, he is a wonder, is forced to beg his bread and is shunned by all the other men of law."[1]

On questions affecting conscience he considered that he alone, as theologian and leader of the others, had a right to decide; yet countless cases which came before the courts touched upon matters of conscience. He exclaims, for instance, in 1531: Must not the lawyers come to me to learn what is really lawful? "I am the supreme judge of what is lawful in the domain of conscience." "If there be a single lawyer in Germany, nay, in the whole world, who understands what is 'lawful *de jure*' and 'lawful *de facto*' then I am . . . surprised." The recorder adds: "When the Doctor swears thus he means it very seriously." Luther proceeds: "In fine, if the jurists don't crave forgiveness

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 289 *seq.* The date, Dec. 4, 1538, must be taken for what it is worth.

and crawl humbly to the Evangel, I shall give them such a doing that they will not know how to escape."[1]

Thus we can understand how, in that same year (1531), when representatives of the secular law interfered in the ecclesiastical affairs at Zwickau against his wishes, he declared: "I will never have any more dealings with those Zwickau people, and I shall carry my resentment with me to the grave." "If the lawyers touch the Canons they will fly in splinters. . . . I will fling the Catechism into their midst and so upset them that they won't know where they are."[2] If they are going to feed on the "filth of the Pope-Ass," and "to put on their horns," then he, too, will put on his and "toss them till the air resounds with their howls." This from the pulpit on Feb. 23, 1539.[3]

The Princes.

With what scant respect Luther could treat the Princes is shown in his work "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt, wie weyt man yhr Gehorsam schuldig sey" (1523).[4]

Here he is not attacking individual Princes as was the case, for instance, in his writings against King Henry of England, Duke George of Saxony and Duke Henry of Brunswick, hence there was here no occasion for the abuse with which these polemical tracts are so brimful. Here Luther is dealing theologically with the relations which should obtain between Princes and subjects and, according to the title and the dedicatory note to Johann of Saxony, professes to discuss calmly and judicially the respective duties of both. Yet, carried away by vexation, because the Princes and the nobles had not complied with his request in his "An den christlichen Adel" that they should rise in a body against Rome, and reform the Church as he desired, he bitterly assails them as a class.

Even in the opening lines all the Princes who, like the Emperor, held fast to the olden faith and sought to preserve their subjects in it, were put on a par with "hair-brained fellows" and loose "rogues." "Now that they want to fleece the poor man and wreak their wantonness on God's Word, they call it obedience to the commands of the Emperor. . . . Because the ravings of such fools leads to the destruction of the Christian faith, the denial of God's Word and blasphemy of the Divine Majesty, I neither can nor will any longer look on calmly at the doings of my ungracious Lords and fretful squires."[5]

[1] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 14. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 8 f.
[3] On Invocavit Sunday, Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 471.
[4] See vol. ii., pp. 297, 305 ff.
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 246 f.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 62 f.

Of the Princes in general he says, that they ought "to rule the country and the people outwardly; this, however, they neglect. They do nothing but rend and fleece the people, heaping impost upon impost and tax upon tax; letting out, here, a bear, and there, a wolf; nor is there any law, fidelity or truth to be found in them, for they behave in such a fashion that to call them robbers and scoundrels would be to do them too great an honour. . . . So well are they earning the hatred of all that they are doomed to perish with the monks and parsons whose rascality they share."[1]

It is here that Luther tells the people that, "from the beginning a wise Prince has been a rare find, and a pious Prince something rarer still. Usually they are the biggest fools or the most arrant knaves on earth; hence one must always expect the worst from them and little good, particularly in Divine things which pertain to the salvation of souls. For they are God's lictors and hangmen."[2] "The usual thing is for Isaias iii. 4 to be verified: 'I will give children to be their princes, and the effeminate shall rule over them.'"[3]

We have to look on while "secular Princes rule in spiritual matters and spiritual Princes in secular things." In what else does the devil's work on earth consist but in making fun of the world and turning it into a pantomime."

In conclusion he hints to the Princes plainly that the "mob and the common folk are beginning to see through it all."[4]

A Protestant writer, in extenuation of such dangerous language against the rulers, recently remarked: "It never entered Luther's head that such words might bring the Princes into contempt and thus, indirectly, promote rebellion. . . . If we are to draw a just conclusion from his blindness to the obvious psychological consequences of his words, it can only be, that Luther was no politician."[5]

It may, indeed, be that he did not then sufficiently weigh the consequences. Nevertheless, in his scurrilous writings against individual Princes he was perfectly ready to brave every possible outcome of his vituperation. "What Luther wrote against the German Princes," justly remarks Döllinger, "against Albert, Elector of Mayence, against the Duke of Brunswick and Duke George of Saxony, puts into the shade all the libels and screeds of the more recent European literature."[6]

One of the chief targets for his shafts was the Archbishop of Mayence.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 265=86. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 267 f.=89.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 268=90. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 270=92 f.
[5] E. Brandenburg ("Schriften des Vereins für RG.," No. 70, Halle, 1901), p. 21. [6] "Die Reformation," 3, p. 265.

Albert, Elector of Mayence, "is a plague to all Germany; the ghastly, yellow, earthen hue of his countenance—a mixture of mud and blood—exactly fits his character; . . . he is deserving of death under the First Table" (viz. because of his transgression of the first commandments of the Decalogue by his utter godlessness).[1] It was, however, not so much on account of his moral shortcomings, notorious though they were, but more particularly because he did not take his side, that Luther regarded him as a "most perfidious rogue" ("*nebulo perfidissimus*"). "If thieves are hanged, then surely the Bishop of Mayence deserves to be hanged as one of the first, on a gallows seven times as high as the Giebenstein. . . . For he fears neither God nor man."[2] When Simon Lemnius, the Humanist, praised Archbishop Albert in a few epigrams, Luther's anger turned against the poet, whom he soundly rated for making "a saint out of a devil." He issued a sort of mandate against Lemnius of which the conclusion was: "I beg our people, and particularly the poets or his [the Archbishop's] sycophants, in future not publicly to praise the shameful merd-priest"; he threatens sharp measures should anyone at Wittenberg dare to praise "the self-condemned lost priest."[3]

The satirical list of relics which, in 1542, he published with a preface and epilogue against the same Elector amounted practically to a libel, and was described by lawyers as a lying slander punishable at law. As a "*libellus famosus*" against a reigning Prince of the Empire it might have entailed serious consequences for its author.

In it Luther says: The Elector, as we learn, is offering "big pardons for many sins," even for sins to be committed for the next ten years, to all who "help in decking out in new clothes the poor, naked bones"; the relics in question, during their translation from Halle to Mayence, had, so Luther tells us, been augmented by other "particles," enriched by the Pope with Indulgences, amongst them, "(1) a fine piece of the left horn of Moses; (2) three flames from the bush of Moses on Mount Sinai; (3) two feathers and one egg of the Holy Ghost," etc., in all, twelve articles, specially chosen to excite derision.

Justus Jonas appears to have been shocked at Luther's ribaldry and to have given Luther an account of what the lawyers were saying. At any rate, we have Luther's reply in his own handwriting, though the top part of the letter has been torn away. In the bottom fragment we read: "[Were it really a libel] which, however, it cannot be, yet I have the authority, right and power [to write such libels] against the Cardinal, Pope, devil and all their crew; and not to have the term '*libellus famosus*' hurled at me. Or have the 'asinists'—I beg your pardon, jurists—studied their jurisprudence in such a way as to be ignorant of what '*subjectum*'

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 139 f. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 504 f.; 6, p. 319 ff.; "Briefwechsel des Justus Jonas," ed. G. Kawerau, 2, p. 84. The "printed Mandate" was affixed to the church door. Cp. E. Michael ("Zeitschr. f. kath. Theol.," 19, 1895), p. 455 ff.

and '*finis*' mean in secular law? [the end in his eyes was a good one]. If I have to teach them, I shall exact smaller fees and teach them unwashed. How has the beautiful Moritzburgk [belonging to the see of Mayence] been turned into a donkey-stable! If they are ready to pipe, I am quite willing to dance, and, if I live, I hope to tread yet another measure with the bride of Mayence."[1] Thus the revolting untruths to which his tactics led him to have recourse, the better to excite the minds of the people, seemed to him a fit subject for jest; in spite of the wounds which the religious warfare was inflicting on the German Church he still saw nothing unseemly in the figure of the dance and the bridal festivity.

An incident of his controversy with the Duke of Brunswick may serve to complete the picture. In 1540, during the hot summer, numerous fires broke out in North and Central Germany, causing widespread alarm; certain alleged incendiaries who were apprehended were reported to have confessed under torture that this was the doing of Duke Henry of Brunswick and the Pope. Before even investigations had commenced Luther had already jumped to the conclusion that the real author was his enemy, the Catholic Duke, backed up by the Pope and the monks; for had not the Duke (according to Luther) explained to the burghers of Goslar that he recognised no duties with regard to heretics?[2] The Franciscans had been expelled and were now in disguise everywhere "plotting vengeance"; they it was who had done it all with the assistance of the Duke of Brunswick and the Elector of Mayence, who, of course, remained behind the scenes.[3] "If this be proved, then there is nothing left for us but to take up arms against the monks and priests; and I too shall go, for miscreants must be slain like mad dogs."[4] Hieronymus Schurf, as the cautious lawyer he was, expressed himself in Luther's presence against the misuse of torture in the case of those accused and against their being condemned too hastily. Luther interrupted him: "This is no time for mercy but for rage!" According to St. Augustine many must suffer in order that many may be at peace; so is it also in the law courts, "now and again some must suffer injustice, so long as it is not done knowingly and intentionally by the judge. In troublous times excessive severity

[1] "Briefe," ed. De Wette & Seidemann, 6, p. 320 ff.
[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 179, Aug., 1540. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 180.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 171. Still more strongly against the Franciscans on p. 180.

must be overlooked."[1] He became little by little so convinced of the guilt of Henry the "incendiary" and his Papists, that, in October, 1540, he refers half-jestingly to the reputation he was acquiring as "prophet and apostle" by so correctly discerning in the Papists a mere band of criminals.[2] He also informed other Courts of the supposed truth of his surmise, viz. that "Harry of Brunswick has now been convicted as an arch-incendiary-assassin and the greatest scoundrel on whom the sun has ever shone. May God give the bloodhound and werewolf his reward. Amen." Thus to Duke Albert of Prussia on April 20, 1541.[3]

Considerably before this, in a letter to the same princely patron, he expressly implicates in these absurd charges the Pope, the chief object of his hate: After telling Albert of the report, that the Duke of Brunswick "had sent out many hundred incendiaries against the Evangelical Estates" of whom more than 300 had been "brought to justice," many of them making confessions implicating the Duke, the Bishop of Mayence and others, Luther goes on to say that the business must necessarily have been set on foot "by great people, for there is plenty of money."

"The Pope is said to have given 80,000 ducats towards it. This is the sort of thing we are compelled to hear and endure; but God will repay them abundantly . . . in hell, in the fire beneath our feet."[4]

"The Doctor said," we read in the Table-Talk, taken down by Mathesius in September (2–17), 1540: "The greatest wonder of our day is that the majesty of the Pope —who was a terror to all monarchs and against whom they dared not move a muscle, seeing that a glance from him or a movement of his finger sufficed to keep them all in a state of fear and obedience—that this god should have collapsed so utterly that even his defenders loathe him. Those who still take his part, without exception do this simply for money's sake and their own advantage, otherwise they would treat him even worse than we do. His malice has now been thoroughly exposed, since it is certain that he sent eighteen

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 222.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 226 f.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 301.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 292 f. Letter of Oct. 10, 1540. De Wette, 5, p. 308, also has 80,000 ducats. In the passage that follows Luther speaks of 18,000 crowns.

thousand crowns for the hiring of incendiaries."[1] The perfect seriousness with which he relates this in the circle of his friends furnishes an enigma.

His consciousness of all that he had accomplished against the Pope, combined with his hatred of Catholicism, seems often to cloud his mind.

2. Luther's Excuse: "We MUST Curse the Pope and His Kingdom"[2]

In Luther's polemics against the Pope and the Papists it is psychologically of importance to bear in mind the depth of the passion which underlies his furious and incessant abuse.

The further we see into Luther's soul, thanks especially to his familiar utterances recorded in the Table-Talk, the more plainly does this overwhelming enmity stand revealed. In what he said privately to his friends we find his unvarnished thought and real feelings. Far from being in any sense artificial, the intense annoyance which rings throughout his abuse seems to rise spontaneously from the very bottom of his soul. That he should have pictured to himself the Papacy as a dragon may be termed a piece of folly, nevertheless it was thus that it ever hovered before his mind, by day and by night, whether in the cheery circle of his friends or in his solitary study, in the midst of ecclesiastical or ecclesiastico-political business, when engaged in quiet correspondence with admirers and even when he sought in prayer help and comfort in his troubles.

In Lauterbach's Diary we find Luther describing the Pope as the "Beast,"[3] the "Dragon of Hell" towards whom "one cannot be too hostile,"[4] as the "Dragon and Crocodile," whose whole being "was, and still is, rascality through and through."[5] "Even were the Pope St. Peter, he would still be godless."[6] "Whoever wishes to glorify the Blood of Christ must needs rage against the Pope who blasphemes it."[7] "The Pope has sold Christ's Blood and the state of matrimony, hence the money-bag [of this Judas] is chock-full of the proceeds of robbery. . . . He has banned and branded me, and stuck me in the devil's behind. Hence I am going to hang him on his own keys."[8] This he said

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 213.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 28, p. 762; Erl. ed., 36, p. 410. See below, p. 304.
[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 171. [4] P. 64. [5] P. 25.
[6] P. 149. [7] P. 64. [8] P. 30.

when a caricature was shown him representing the Pope strung up next to Judas, with the latter's money-bag.

"I am the Pope's devil," so he declared to his companions, "hence it is that he hates and persecutes me."[1]

And yet the chief crime of this execrated Papacy was its non-acceptance of Luther's innovations. The legal measures taken against him agreeably with the olden law, whether of the State or of the Church, were no proof of "hatred," however much they might lame his own pretensions.

In other notes of his conversations we read: "Formerly we looked at the Pope's face, now we look only at his posterior, in which there is no majesty."[2] "The city of Rome now lies mangled and the devil has discharged over it his filth, i.e. the Pope."[3] It is a true saying, that, "if there be a hell, Rome is built upon it."[4]

"Almost all the Romans are now sunk in Epicurism; they trouble themselves not at all about God or a good conscience. Alack for our times! I used to believe that the Epicurean doctrine was dead and buried, yet here it is still flourishing."[5]

At the very commencement of the Diary of Cordatus, Luther is recorded as saying: "The Pope has lost his cunning. It is stupid of him still to seek to lead people astray under the pretence of religion, now that mankind has seen through the devil's trickery. To maintain his kingdom by force is equally foolish because it is impracticable."[6]—He proceeds in a similar strain: "The Papists, like the Jews, insist that everyone who wishes to be saved must observe their ceremonies, hence they will perish like the Jews."[7]—He maliciously quotes an old rhyme in connection with the Pope, who is both the "head of the world" and "the beast of the earth," and, in support of this, adduces abundant quotations from the Apocalypse.[8]—When Daniel declared that Antichrist would trouble neither about God nor about woman (xi. 37), this meant that "the Pope would recognise neither God nor lawful wives, that, in a word, he would despise religion and all domestic and social life, which all turned on womankind. Thus may we understand what was foretold, viz. that Antichrist would despise all laws, ordinances, statutes, rights and every good usage, contemn kings, princes, empires and everything that exists in heaven or on earth merely the better to extol his fond inventions."[9]—It is difficult to assume that all this was mere rhetoric, for, then, why was it persisted in? Intentionally hyperbolical utterances are as a rule brief. In these conversations, however, the tone never changes, but merely becomes at times even more emphatic.

On the same page in Cordatus we read: "Children are lucky in that they come into the world naked and penniless; for the

[1] P. 163. [2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 439, "Tischreden."
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 441, and Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 100.
[5] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 190. Cp. Schlaginhaufen, p. 5.
[6] P. 2. [7] P. 3. [8] P. 7. [9] P. 9.

Pope levies toll on everything there is on the earth, save only upon baptism, because he can't help it."[1] And immediately after: "The Pope has ceased to be a teacher and has become, as his Decretals testify, a belly-server and speculator. In the Decretals he treats not at all of theological matters but merely pursues three self-seeking ends: First, he does everything to strengthen his domination; secondly, he does his best to set the kings and princes at loggerheads with each other whenever he wants to score off one of the great, in doing which he does not scruple to show openly his malice; thirdly, he plays the devil most cunningly, when, with a friendly air, he allays the dissensions he had previously stirred up among the sovereigns; this, however, he only does when his own ends have been achieved. He also perverts the truth of God's Word [thus invading the theological field]. This, however, he does not do as Pope, but as Antichrist and God's real enemy."[2]

The whole mountain of abuse expressed here and in what follows rests on this last assumption, viz. that the Pope perverts "the truth of God's Word"; thanks to this the Wittenberg Professor fancied he could overthrow a Church which had fifteen centuries behind it. His hate is just as deeply rooted in his soul as his delusion concerning his special call.

According to the German Colloquies the Pope, like Mohammed, "began under the Emperor Phocas": "The prophecy [of the Apocalypse] includes both, the Pope and the Turk."[3] Still, the Pope is the "best ruler" for the world, because he does know how to govern; "he is lord of our fields, meadows, money, houses and everything else, yea, of our very bodies"; for this "he repays the world in everlasting curses and maledictions; this is what the world wants and it duly returns thanks and kisses his feet."[4]—"He is rather the lawyers' than the theologians' god."[5]

He is determined to turn me "straightway into a slave of sin" and to force me to "blaspheme," but instead of "denying God" I shall withstand the Pope; "otherwise we would willingly have borne and endured the Papal rule."[6]—"No words are bad enough to describe the Pope. We may call him miserly, godless and idolatrous, but all this falls far short of the mark. It is impossible to grasp and put into words his great infamies;"[7] in short, as Christ says, "he is the abomination of desolation standing in the Holy Place."[8]

The Pope is indeed the "father of abominations and the poisoner of souls." "After the devil the Pope is a real devil."[9] "After the devil there is no worse man than the Pope with his lies and his man-made ordinances";[10] in fact, he is a masked devil incarnate.[11] No one can become Pope unless he be a finished and consummate knave and miscreant."[12] The Pope is a

[1] P. 9. [2] P. 10. [3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 391, "Tischreden."
[4] *Ibid.*, 60, p. 227 f., in chapter xxvii. of the Table-Talk.
[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 68. [6] *Ibid.*, 57, p. 80.
[7] *Ibid.*, 60, p. 206. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 183. [9] *Ibid.*, p. 214.
[10] *Ibid.*, 62, p. 222. [11] *Ibid.*, 60, p. 180. [12] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

"lion" in strength and a "dragon" in craft.[1] He is "an out-and-out Jew who extols in Christ only what is material and temporal";[2] needless to say, he is "far worse than the Turk,"[3] "a mere idolater and slave of Satan,"[4] "a painted king but in reality a filthy pretence,"[5] his kingdom is a "Carnival show,"[6] and he himself "Rat-King of the monks and nuns."[7] Popery is full of murder;[8] it serves Moloch,[9] and is the kingdom of all who blaspheme God.

"For the Pope is, not the shepherd, but the devil of the Churches; this comforts me as often as I think of it."[10]

"Anno 1539, on May 9," we read in these Colloquies, "Dr. Martin for three hours held a severe and earnest Disputation in the School at Wittenberg, against that horrid monster, the Pope, that real werewolf who excels in fury all the tyrants, who alone wishes to be above all law and to act as he pleases, and even to be worshipped, to the loss and damnation of many poor souls. . . . But he is a donkey-king [he said] . . . I hope he has now done his worst [now that I have broken his power]; but neither are the Papists ever to be trusted, even though they agree to peace and bind themselves to it under seal and sign-manual. . . . Therefore let us watch and pray!"[11]

The Disputation, of which all that is known was published by Paul Drews in 1895,[12] dealt principally with the question, which had become a vital one, of armed resistance to the forces of the Empire then intent on vindicating the rights of the Pope. The Theses solve the question in the affirmative. "The Pope is no 'authority' ordained by God . . . on the contrary he is a robber, a 'Bearwolf' who gulps down everything. And just as everybody rightly seeks to destroy this monster, so also it is everyone's duty to suppress the Pope by force, indeed, penance must be done by those who neglect it. If anyone is killed in defending a wild beast it is his own fault. In the same way it is not wrong to offer resistance to those who defend the Pope, even should they be Princes or Emperors."[13]

A German version of the chief Theses (51–70) was at once printed.[14]

[1] P. 305. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 200. [3] *Ibid.*, 61, p. 149.
[4] *Ibid.*, 57, p. 206. [5] *Ibid.*, 60, p. 255. [6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 185. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 291. [9] *Ibid.*, 57, p. 367 f.
[10] *Ibid.*, 60, p. 379, chapter xxvii. [11] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[12] "Disputationen Dr. Martin Luthers, 1535–1545," ed. P. Drews, pp. 532–584. Cp. the Theses already published in Luther's "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 442 *seq.*

[13] They are thus summed up by Drews (p. 533).

[14] Thesis 56: "*Papa est illud monstrum, de quo Daniel dicit, quod adversatur omni Deo, etiam Deo deorum.*"—Thesis 58: "*Nostri Germani vocant Beerwolf, quod Græci, si forte notum illis fuisset, dixissent* ἀρκτόλυκον" (i.e. "Bearwolf").—Thesis 59: "*Hoc animal lupus est quidem, sed a dæmone arreptus, lacerat omnia et elabitur omnibus venabulis et armis.*"—Thesis 60: "*Ad quod opprimendum necessarius est concursus omnium pagorum,*" etc.—Thesis 61: "*Nec est hic expectanda iudicis sententia aut consilii auctoritas,*" etc.—Thesis 66: "*Ita*

Among the explanations given by Luther previous to the Disputation ("*circulariter disputabimus*") the following are worthy of note: "We will not worship the Pope any longer as has been done heretofore. . . . Rather, we must fight against this Satan."[1] "The Pope is such a monstrous beast that no ruler or tyrant can equal him. . . . He requires us to worship his public blasphemy in defiance of the law; it is as though he said: I will and command that you adore the devil. It is not enough for him to strangle me, but he will have it that even the soul is damned at his word of command. . . . The Pope is the devil. Were I able to slay the devil, why should I not risk my life in doing so? Look not on the Pope as a man; his very worshippers declare that he is no mere man, but partly man and partly God. For 'God' here read 'devil.' Just as Christ is God-made-flesh, so the Pope is the devil incarnate."[2]—"Who would not lend a hand against this arch-pestilential monster? There is none other such in the whole world as he, who exalts himself far above God. Other wolves there are indeed, yet none so impudent and imperious as this wolf and monster."[3]

In this celebrated Disputation some of the objections are couched in scholastic language. Such is the following: According to the Bible, Antichrist is to be destroyed by the breath of God's mouth and not by the sword; therefore armed resistance to the Pope and the Papists is not allowed. Luther replies: "That we concede, for what we say is that he will escape and remain with us till the end of the world. He is nevertheless to be resisted, and the Emperor too, and the Princes who defend him, not on the Emperor's account, but for the sake of this monstrous beast."[4]—Another objection runs: "Christ forbade Peter to make use of his sword against those sent out by the Pharisees; therefore neither must we take up arms against the Pope." The reply was: "*Negabitur consequens*," and Luther goes on to explain: "The Pope is no authority as Caiphas and Pilate were. He is the devil's servant, possessed of the devil, a wolf who tyrannically carries off souls without any right or mandate." According to the report Luther suddenly relapsed into German: "If Peter went to Rome and slew him, he would be acting rightly, '*quia papa non habet ordinationem*,'" etc.[5] Justus Jonas and Cruciger also took a part, bringing forward objections in order to exercise others in refuting them. This theological tournament, with its crazy ideas couched in learned terminology, might well cause the dispassionate historian to smile were it not for the sombre background and the vision of the religious wars for which ardent young students were being fitted and equipped.

si papa bellum moverit, resistendum est ei sicut monstro furioso et obsesso seu vere ἀρκτολύκῳ."—Thesis 68: "*Nec curandum, si habeat militantes sibi principes, reges vel ipsos cæsares, titulo ecclesiæ incantatos.*"

[1] Drews, p. 544.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 549. Given in Luther's German Works, Jena ed., 7, p. 285, and Halle ed. (Walch), 19, p. 2438 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 552.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 559, Jena ed., 285′, Walch, p. 2440.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 566.

What we have quoted from Luther's familiar talks and from his disputations affords overwhelming proof, were such wanting, that the frenzied outbursts against the Pope we find even in his public writings, were, not merely assumed, but really sprang from the depths of his soul. It is true that at times they were regarded as rhetorical effusions or even as little more than jokes, but as a matter of fact they bear the clearest stamp of his glowing hate. They indicate a persistent and eminently suspicious frame of mind, which deserves to be considered seriously as a psychological, if not pathological, condition; what we must ask ourselves is, how far the mere hint of Popery sufficed to call forth in him a delirium of abuse.

In his tract of 1531 against Duke George he boasted, that people would in future say, that "his mouth was full of angry words, vituperation and curses on the Papists"; that "he intended to go down to his grave cursing and abusing the miscreants";[1] that as long as breath remained in him he would "pursue them to their grave with his thunders and lightnings";[2] again, he says he will take refuge in his maledictory prayer against the Papists in order to "kindle righteous hatred in his heart," and even expounds and recommends this prayer in mockery to his opponent[3]—in all this we detect an abnormal feature which characterises his life and temper. This abnormity is apparent not only in the intense seriousness with which he utters the most outrageous things, more befitting a madman than a reasonable being, but also at times in the very satires to which he has recourse. That the Papacy would have still more to suffer from him after he was dead, is a prophecy on which he is ever harping: "When I die," he remarks, "I shall turn into a spirit that will so plague the bishops, parsons and godless monks, that one dead Luther will give them more trouble than a thousand living Luthers."[4]

No theological simile is too strange for him in this morbid state of mind and feeling. As in the case of those obsessed by a fixed idea the delusion is ever obtruding itself under every possible shape, so, in a similar way, every thought, all

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 470; Erl. ed., 25², p. 127. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.* See above, p. 208. Cp. Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 111: "*Quando frigeo in corde . . . oppono contra me impietatem papæ*," etc.; "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 107 f.; "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 294.
[4] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 74.

his studies, his practice, learning, theology and exegesis, even when its bearing seems most remote, leads up to this central and all-dominating conviction : " I believe that the Pope is a devil incarnate in disguise, for he is Endchrist. For as Christ is true God and true man, so also is Antichrist a devil incarnate."[1] And yet, in the past, so he adds with a deep sigh, " we worshipped all his lies and idolatry."

He is very painstaking in his anatomy of the Pope-Antichrist. " The head of Antichrist," he said, " is both the Pope and the Turk ; a living creature must have both body and soul ; the Pope is Antichrist's soul or spirit, but the Turk is his flesh or body ; for the latter lays waste, destroys and persecutes the Church of God materially, just as the Pope does so spiritually." Considering, however, that he had unduly exonerated the Pope, he corrects himself and adds : And materially also ; " materially, viz. by laying waste with fire and sword, hanging, murdering, etc." The Church, however, so he prophesies, will nevertheless " hold the field and resist the Pope's hypocrisy and idolatry." He then goes on to make a fanciful application of Daniel's prophecy concerning the kingdoms of the world to the Pope's downfall. " The text compels us " to take the prophecy (Apoc. xiii. 7) as also referring to the " Papal abomination." " The Pope shall be broken without hands and perish and die of himself."[2]

That the Pope was spiritually destroying the Church he had already asserted as early as 1520 in his " Von dem Bapstum tzu Rome " : " Of all that is of Divine appointment not one jot is now observed at Rome ; indeed, if anyone thought of doing what is manifestly such, it would be derided as folly. They let the Gospel and the Christian faith perish everywhere and turn never a hair ; moreover, every bad example of mischief, spiritual and secular, flows from Rome over the whole world as from an ocean of wickedness. All this the Romans laugh at, and whoever laments it is looked upon as a ' bon christian ' [' *cristiano* '], i.e. a fool."[3]

The strength of Luther's delusion that the Pope was Antichrist and shared the diabolical nature furnishes the chief explanation of the hopelessly bitter way in which he deals with all those who ventured to defend the Papacy. On all such he heaps abuse and assails them with that worst of the weapons at his command, viz. with calumny, calling into question their good faith and denying to them the character of Christians.

Johann Eck, so he assured his friends in 1538, " when at Rome, profited splendidly by the example of Epicurus ; his short stay

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 180. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 177 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 6, p. 287 f. ; Erl. ed., 27, p. 90.

there was quite sufficient for him. No doubt he possesses great talent and a good memory, but he is impudence itself, and, at the bottom of his heart, cares as little about the Pope as he does about the Gospel. Twenty years ago I should never have thought it possible to find such Epicureans within the Church."[1] Eck is "a bold-lipped and bloodthirsty sophist."[2] In 1532, somewhat more indulgently, Luther had said of him: "Eccius is no preacher. . . . He can indeed talk *ad lib.* of drinking, gambling, light women and boon companions"; what, however, he says in his sermons he either does not take seriously or at any rate his heart is not in it.[3] In 1542, nevertheless, Luther was heard to say: "I believe he has made himself over to the devil and entered into a bargain with him how long he will be allowed to live."[4] As was but natural, the man who had "never really taken the defence of the Pope seriously" died impenitent. According to Luther he passed away without making any confession, without even saying, "God be gracious to me."[5]

Could we trust Luther, Johannes Fabri, another Catholic opponent, "blasphemed himself to death." Surely, thus "to sin deliberately and of set purpose, exceeds all bounds."[6]

Joachim I., Elector of Brandenburg († 1535), who remained faithful to the Church, was abused by Luther as a "liar, mad bloodhound, devilish Papist, murderer, traitor, desperate miscreant, assassin of souls, arch-knave, dirty pig and devil's child, nay, the devil himself."

We may recall the epithets he bestowed on Henry VIII. for having presumed to criticise him: "Crowned donkey, abandoned, senseless man, excrement of hogs and asses, impudent royal windbag, mad Harry, arrant fool."[7]

Cardinal Cajetan, the famous theologian, was, according to Luther, "an ambiguous, secretive, incomprehensible, mad theologian, and as well qualified to understand and judge his cause as an ass would be to play upon the harp."[8] Hoogstraaten, the Cologne Dominican, "does not know the difference between what is in agreement with and what contrary to Scripture; he is a mad, bloodthirsty murderer, a blind and hardened donkey, who ought to be put to scratch for dung-beetles in the manure-heaps of the Papists."

Of his attacks on Duke George of Saxony, the "Dresden Assassin," we need only mention the parting shaft he flung into his opponent's grave: "Let Pharao perish with all his tribe; even though he [the Duke] felt the prick of conscience yet he was never truly contrite. . . . Now he has been rooted out. . . .

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 190.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 286; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 16.
[3] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 118.
[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 269.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 307.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 249; cp. p. 115.
[7] See vol. ii., p. 153.
[8] Letter to Carlstadt, Oct. 14, 1518, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 4 ("Briefwechsel," 1, p. 249).

God sometimes consents to look on for a while, but afterwards He punishes the race even down to the children."[1]

No one who in any way stood up for the Papal Decrees was safe from Luther's ungovernable abuse, not even those statesmen who followed them from necessity rather than out of any respect for the Church. Luther is determined, so he says, "not to endure the excrement and filth of the Pope-Ass. . . . For goodness' sake don't come stirring up the donkey's dung and papal filth in the churches, particularly in this town [Wittenberg]. . . . The Pope defiles the whole world with his donkey's dung, but why not let him eat it himself ? . . . Let sleeping dogs lie, this I beg of you [and do not worry me with the Pope], otherwise I shall have to give you what for. . . . I must desist, otherwise I shall get too angry."[2]

With the real defenders of the Papal Decrees, or the olden faith, he was, however, never afraid of becoming "too angry"; the only redeeming feature being, that, at times the overwhelming consciousness of his fancied superiority brings his caustic wit to his assistance and his anger dissolves into scorn. Minus this pungent ingredient, his polemics would be incomprehensible, nor would his success have been half so great.

An example of his descriptions of such Catholics who wrote and spoke against him is to be found in his preface to a writing of Klingenbeyl's. He there jokingly congratulates himself on having been the means of inducing his opponents to study the Bible in order to refute him: "Luther has driven these blockheads to Holy Scripture, just as though a man were to bring a lot of new animals to a menagerie. Here Dr. Cockles [Cochlæus] barks like a dog; there Brand of Berne [Johann Mensing] yelps like a fox; the Leipzig preacher of blasphemy [Johann Koss] howls like a wolf; Dr. Cunz Wimpina grunts like a snorting sow, and there is so much noise and clamour amongst the beasts that really I am quite sorry to have started the chase. . . . They are supposed to be conversant with Scripture, and yet are quite ignorant of how to handle it."[3]

In a more serious and tragic tone he points out, how many of his foes and opponents had been carried off suddenly by a Divine judgment. He even drafted a long list of such instances, supplied with hateful glosses of his

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 206. Cp. what he says of Duke George, above, p. 190.

[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 295.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 274. On Brand of Berne cp. N. Paulus, "Die deutschen Dominikaner im Kampfe mit Luther," 1903, pp. 16–45; on p. 29 f. there is a remark of Luther's on the "poor smoking 'brand' which escaped the fire of Berne," rightly taken by Paulus to apply to Mensing (Seckendorf, Walch, De Wette and Enders were of a different opinion).—J. Koss, the Leipzig preacher, is again described by Luther in a letter to N. Hausmann (Jan. 2, 1533, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 260) as a "preacher of blasphemy."

own, which he alleged as a proof of the "visible action of God" in support of his cause.[1] Johann Koss, the "preacher of blasphemy," mentioned above, was given a place in this libellous catalogue after he had been seized with a stroke of apoplexy in the pulpit (Dec. 29, 1532). At the instance of Duke George he had been appointed assistant preacher under Hieronymus Dungersheim, that, by means of his elocutionary talent, he might defend the town of Leipzig against the inroads of the new teaching. What particularly incensed Luther was the use this preacher made of his Postils to refute him by his own words. The stroke came on him while he was vindicating the Catholic doctrine of good works. This circumstance, taken in conjunction with the "place, time and individual," was for Luther an irrefutable proof of the intervention of "God's anger." "Christ," he says, "struck down His enemy, the Leipzig shouter, in the very midst of his blasphemy."[2] The zealous preacher died about a month later.

"None are more pitiable," Luther says elsewhere of this incident, "than the presumptuous, such as are all the Papists."[3] It was impossible for him to inveigh with sufficient severity against the presumption which threatened him on all sides, despite the excessive kindliness and moderation with which he occasionally credits himself; for were not those who confronted him "the devil and his hirelings"? He was forced to combat the frightful presumption of these men who acted as though they were "steeped in holiness"; for in reality they are "dirty pig-snouts"; as Papists they are "at the very least, murderers, thieves and persecutors"; hence let all rise up against the "servers of idols."[4]

"We must curse the Pope and his kingdom and revile and

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 158. Under the heading "*Mortes persecutorum*," the list commences with the words: "*Pauci præsentia Dei miracula observant.*" It contains the names of Richard von Greifenklau, Archbishop of Treves, Ernest Count of Mansfeld, Count Wartenberg, Dr. Matthias Henning, son of Henning the lawyer, Cæsar Pflug, Chancellor of Treves, and, besides, a Catholic preacher at Leipzig, a minister who had fallen away from Lutheranism at Kunewalde, a monk who was alleged to have spoken against the Apostle Paul, and a Silesian Doctor of Divinity. Then followed various additions. Cp. N. Paulus, "Luther über das schlimme Ende seiner Gegner" ("Katholik," 1899, 2, pp. 490–505).

[2] Letter to Nicholas Hausmann, Jan. 2, 1533, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 260.

[3] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 289.

[4] All of the above expressions are taken from the first pages of "Widder den Radschlag der Meintzischen Pfafferey" (1526).

abuse it, and not close our jaws but preach against it without ceasing. There are some now who say we are capable of nothing else but of damning, scolding and slandering the Pope and his followers." "Yes, and so it must be."[1]

Elsewhere he hints which vilely vulgar terms of opprobrium were to be applied to the Pope, and, after instancing them, adds: "It is thus that we should learn to make use of these words." The Catholic Princes were also aimed at in this instruction which occurs in one of his sermons. This discourse, pronounced on Jan. 12, 1531, at a time when the intervention of the hostile secular powers was feared, was printed ten years later under the title "Ein trostlich Unterricht wie man sich gegen den Tyrannen, so Christum und sein Wort verfolgen halten soll."[2]

"Our mad and raving Princes," he says, "are now raging and blustering and planning to root out this teaching. Whoever is desirous of devoting himself to Christ must daily be ready to suffer any peril to life and limb." Amongst the grounds for encouragement he adduces is the fact that even his very foes admitted, "that we preach and teach God's Word; the only thing amiss being, that it was not done at their bidding, but that we at Wittenberg started it all unknown to them." He calls the angry Princes "great merd-pots," who are "kings and rulers of the pig-sty of the earth where the belly, the universal cesspool, reigns supreme." "But we will be of good cheer and put our fingers to our noses at them"; because we hold fast to Christ therefore we suffer persecution from the world. "Who is the Pope, that he should be angry? . . . A sickly, smelly scarecrow." "The Pope says: I will excommunicate you, thrust you down to the abyss of hell. [I tell him] Stick your tongue in my ——. I am holy, am baptised, have God's Word and His Promises to proclaim, but you are a sickly, syphilitic sack of maggots. It is thus that we should learn to make use of these words."[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, 28, p. 868=36, p. 410.—For the tone of Luther's polemics against his theological opponents among both the Catholics and the Protestants, cp. vol. ii., p. 153 f., where the opinions of contemporaries, and friends of Luther's immediate circle are given. For further criticisms of Catholic contemporaries see below, p. 251 ff., also vol. v., xxxiii., on the extreme tension of Luther's polemics against Popery towards the end of his life.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 1, p. 83 ff.

[3] Cp. below, p. 320, n. 15, and p. 323, n. 2.

3. The Psychology of Luther's Abusive Language

Various Psychological Factors.

Psychologically to appreciate the phenomenon in question we must first of all take into account Luther's temperament.

To every unprejudiced observer it must be clear, that, without the unusual excitability natural to him, many of his utterances would be quite inexplicable ; even when we have given due weight to Luther's ungovernable temper and all too powerful imagination they still present many difficult questions to the observer. Luther himself, as early as 1520, excuses to Spalatin his offensive language on the ground of his natural " hot-bloodedness " ; as everybody knew what his temper was, his opponents ought not to annoy him as they did ; yet these " monsters " only provoked him the more, and made him " overstep the bounds of modesty and decency."[1] It is perfectly true that some of his foes did provoke him by their mode of attack, yet on the other hand his own violence usually put theirs in the shade. (See below, xxvii., 4.)

In addition to his natural impetuosity which furnishes the chief basis of the phenomenon under consideration, several other factors must also be envisaged, depending on the objects or persons arousing his indignation.

It is clear that he was within his rights when he scourged the anti-Christian blasphemy and seductive wiles of the Jews, however much he may have been in the wrong in allowing himself to be carried away by fanaticism so far as to demand their actual persecution. The same holds good of many of the instances of his ungenerous and violent behaviour towards " heretics " in his own fold. As against the many and oftentimes very palpable defects of their position, he knew how to stand up for truth and logic, though his way of doing so was not always happy, nor his strictures untouched by his own theological errors.

Nor can it be denied that he was in the right when he assailed the real, and, alas, all too many abuses of the olden Church. The lively sense that, at least in this respect, he was in the right may quite possibly have fed the inward fire of his animosity to Catholics, all the more owing to his

[1] Letter written soon after Feb. 18, 1520, " Briefwechsel," 2, p. 329 f.

being in the wrong in those new doctrines which were his principal concern. To the assurance, and the offensive manner in which he insisted on a reform, his visit to Rome, a distorted recollection of which ever remained with him, no doubt contributed. His mind was ever reverting to the dismal picture—by no means an altogether imaginary one—of the immorality prevailing in even the highest ecclesiastical circles of Rome.

Rome's unworthy treatment of the system of indulgences, which had afforded the occasion of his action in 1517, continued to supply new fuel for his indignation ; to it he was fond of tracing back his whole undertaking. What increased his anger was the thought that it was this same Rome, whose ignoble practices both in the matter of indulgences and in other fields was notorious, who had called him to judgment. It is painful to the Catholic to have to confess that many of Luther's complaints were by no means unfounded. He will, however, call to mind the better churchmen of those days, who, though indignant at the sad corruption then prevalent, never dreamt of apostasy, knowing as they did, that even far worse scandals could never justify a revolt against the institution appointed by Christ for the salvation of souls.

Even when voicing his real grievances Luther was seldom either prudent or moderate. He never seems to have quite taken to heart the scriptural injunction : " Let every man be slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man worketh not the justice of God." He expounds in his Postils the Epistle where the admonition in question occurs,[1] but it is curious to note how cursorily he dismisses the words, with which, maybe, he felt somewhat out of sympathy, though here, as elsewhere, he refers to the evil consequences of any proneness to anger. On the other hand, he insists, that " our censures and rebukes " must be in accordance with the " right and true Word," i.e. with theology as he understood it.[2] He prefers to devote far the greater portion of the exposition to proving his favourite thesis, that, thanks to the Evangel now proclaimed, " we have a good and cheerful conscience, stronger than all fear, sin and temptation, and containing the sure hope of life everlasting " ;[3] " it

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 8^2, p. 277 ff., on the Epistle James i. 16–21, on the 4th Sunday after Easter. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 286. [3] P. 282.

is a Word that has power to save your souls ; what more can you desire ? "[1] He seems averse to inculcating that meekness which the text requires.

One factor which frequently fanned the flames was jealousy, when, for instance, he had to deal with theological opponents who appeared to be making too small account of him. The new Evangel, he said, was endangered by none more than by the " fanatics and sacramentarians " ; to defend his personal position against them had cost him the hardest struggle of his whole life ; no wonder that against them he opened wide the sluice-gates of his eloquence. He was keenly sensitive to any slight. " Things are going all wrong in the world," he sighed in 1532. " We are already looked upon with contempt, but let us gather up the fragments when they are cheapest, that is what I advise."[2] Of Carlstadt twelve years previous he had written : " If he has no respect for me, which of us then will he respect ? And what is the good of admonishing him ? I believe he reckons me one of the most learned men in Wittenberg, and yet he actually tells me to my very face that I am nobody. . . . He writes right and left just as he chooses and looks on poor Wittenberg as quite beneath his notice."[3] Luther's vexation explains his language. A pity one of the Princes did not let him taste cold steel ; if Carlstadt believed in a God in heaven, then might Christ never more be gracious to him (Luther) ; he was no man, but an incarnation of the evil spirit, etc.

Not merely his former friend Carlstadt but others too he accused of inordinate ambition because they wished to discredit his discoveries and his position. " It is the ' *gloria* ' that does the mischief," he said in 1540 in his Table-Talk, " Zwingli was greedy of honour, as we see from what he wrote, viz. that he had learnt nothing from me. I should indeed be sorry had he learnt from me, for he went astray. Œcolampadius thought himself too learned to listen to me or to learn from me ; of course, he too, surpassed me. Carlstadt also declares : ' I care nothing for you,' and Münzer actually declaimed against two Popes, the new one

[1] P. 288.

[2] Schlaginhaufen, " Aufzeichnungen," p. 115 f.

[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 89 ; Erl. ed., 29, p. 166, " Widder die hymelischen Propheten."

[myself] and the old.[1] All who shun us and attack us secretly have departed from the faith, like Jeckel and Grickel [Jakob Schenk and Johann Agricola]; they reached their understanding by their own efforts and learnt nothing from us! Just like Zwingli." Yet twenty-five years before (i.e. previous to his great discovery in 1515) no one "knew anything," and, twenty-one years before, he, all alone, under the Divine guidance had put the ball in motion. "Ah, *κενοδοξία* [vainglory], that's the mischief."[2]

Jealousy played its part also, when, in 1525, he rounded so violently upon Zwingli and the Zwinglians at Strasburg. Zwingli's crime in his eyes lay not merely in his having, like Œcolampadius, adopted a divergent doctrine on the Eucharist, but in his claim to have been before Luther in preaching the Gospel of Christ openly according to its true meaning.[3] Both circumstances contributed to Luther's ire, which, after finding vent in many angry words, culminated at last in the rudest abuse of Zwingli and his "devilish" crew. Already in 1525, he wrote in the instruction for the people of Strasburg which he gave to Gregory Casel, who had come to Wittenberg to negotiate:[4] "One of the parties must be the tool of Satan, i.e. either they or we."[5] "Christ can have no part with Belial." And, before this: "They [Zwingli and Œcolampadius] disturb our Church and weaken our repute. Hence we cannot remain silent. If they would be vexed to see their own reputation suffer, let them also think of ours." "They ought to have held their tongues long ago [on the question of the Sacrament]; now silence comes too late." He concludes with the assurance, that their error was refuted by "the Spirit," and that it was impossible they could have any certainty concerning their doctrine, whereas he could justly boast, that he had the experience of the faith and the testimony of the Spirit ("*experimentum fidei et spiritus testimonium*"). "They will never win the day. It pains me that Zwingli and his followers take offence at my saying that 'What I write must be true.'"

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 167.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 169. [3] See vol. iii., p. 379 f.
[4] Letter of Nov. 5, 1525, to Gregory Casel, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 263 ff.
[5] "*Summa, utros oportet esse Sathanæ ministros, vel ipsos, vel nos.*"

Apart from the doctrine on the Sacrament, the other thing which helped to annoy him stands revealed more plainly in the letter addressed on the same day to the Strasburg preachers: "We dare to boast that Christ was first made known by us, and now Zwingli actually comes and accuses us of denying Christ."[1] Bossuet was quite right in arguing that such petty jealousy on Luther's part is scarcely to his credit.[2] He quotes a criticism on Luther's behaviour by George Calixt, the famous Lutheran professor of theology at Helmstädt: "The sweetness of vainglory is so seductive and human weakness so great, that even those who despise all things and risk their goods, yea life itself, may succumb to inordinate ambition." Luther, too, had high aims; "we cannot be surprised that, even a man so large-minded as Luther, should have written such things to the people of Strasburg."[3]

Offended vanity played a part as great and even more obvious in Luther's furious polemics against the literary defenders of the Church. One cannot help noticing how, especially when they had succeeded in making out a clear case against him, his answer was a torrent of most unsparing abuse.

The eloquence which he had at his command also constituted a temptation. He was well aware of the force with which his impassioned language carried others away. Very little was thus needed to induce him to take up this formidable weapon which at least ensured his success among the masses. He himself revelled in the unquenchable wealth of his vituperative vocabulary, and with it he caught the fancy of thousands who loved nothing more than a quarrel. If it be true that all popular orators are exposed to the temptation to exaggerate, to say things which are striking rather than correct, and, generally, to court the applause of the crowd, this danger was even greater in Luther's case owing to the whole character of the controversy he had stirred up. In the midst of a stormy sea one does not speak softly.

[1] To the Strasburg preachers, Nov. 5, 1525: "*Christum a nobis primo vulgatum audemus gloriari, at huius negationis iam traducit nos Zwinglius.*" *Ibid.*, p. 262.

[2] "Hist. des variations des églises protestantes," Paris, 1702, 1, p. 69.

[3] "Iudicium de controversiis theol. inter Luther. et Ref.," 1650, c. 53.

Luther's abuse was, however, powerful enough to be heard above even the most furious tempest.

For his work Luther required an extraordinary stimulus. He would have succumbed under the countless and burdensome labours which devolved on him had he not constantly aroused himself anew by the exercise of a sort of violence. Vituperation thus became to him a real need. When he had succeeded thereby in working himself up into a passion his mind grew clearer and his imagination more vigorous, so that he found it all the easier to borrow from the lips of the mob that rude language of which he makes such fell use. He kindles his animation by dwelling on the " vermin and running sores of Popery."

In the same way from time to time he found the need of unburdening himself of his ill-humour. The small success of his labours for the reform of morals and his other annoying experiences gave him many an unhappy hour. His bad humour found an outlet in abuse and vituperation, particularly against the enemies of the Evangel. He himself was unable to conceal the real grounds of the vexation which he vented on the Papacy, for, often enough, after storming against the Papists, he complains bitterly of his own followers' contempt for the " Word " and of their evil lives.

After the utterance already recorded : " We must curse the Pope and his kingdom," he goes on to levy charges of the worst character against those of his own party, and pours forth on them, too, all the vials of his wrath and disappointment. It was in this connection that he said, that the Evangelicals were seven times worse than before ; for the one devil that had been expelled, seven worse had entered in, so horribly did they lie, cheat, gorge and swill and indulge in every vice ; princes, lords, nobles, burghers and peasants alike had lost all fear of God.[1]

Another example, takén this time from the year 1536. Full of anger against the Pope he said to a friend who held a high post : " My dear fellow, do hurl a Paternoster as a curse against the Papacy that it may be smitten with the Dance of St. Vitus." He adds : " Don't mind my way of speaking, for indeed you know it well ; I am coarse and rough . . . so sore beset, oppressed and overwhelmed with business of all kinds, that, to save my poor carcase I must sometimes indulge in a little pleasure, for, after all, man is only human "[2]—an utterance psychologically

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 28, p. 763 ; Erl. ed., 36, p. 411.

[2] To Caspar Müller, Chancellor at Mansfeld, Jan. 19, 1536, " Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 119 (" Briefewechsel," 10, p. 290).

valuable. The real reason for the depression against which he was struggling is, however, clearer in other letters dating from that time. In them we get a glimpse of his grievous vexation and annoyance with the false teachers within the Evangelical fold: "New prophets are arising one after the other. I almost long to be delivered [by death] so as not to have to go on seeing so much mischief, and to be free at last from this kingdom of the devil. I implore you to pray to God that He would grant me this."[1]

Lastly, his outbursts against the Papacy served to cover his own anxiety of conscience.

In the same way as others who leave their Church, fling themselves into the turmoil and distractions of the world in order to escape their scruples, Luther too, allayed the reproach of his conscience by precipitating himself into the midst of the storm he had evoked; with this advantage, that the sharp weapons of abuse and scorn he employed could be turned against the enemy both without and within. Accustomed as he was to treat the voice of conscience as the voice of Satan, he willingly clung to the doubtful consolation that the stronger his abuse of his opponents the greater his own encouragement. The evil which he detected in Popery seemed to him to load the scale in his own favour. He even admits this with the most engaging frankness.

"I am quite ready to allow that the Pope's abomination is, after Christ, my greatest consolation. Hence those are hopeless simpletons who say we should not abuse the Pope. Don't be slow in abuse, particularly when the devil attacks you on Justification." He intends "to infuse courage into himself by considering the abomination and horror" of the Pope; and to "hold it up under the devil's nose."[2] Döllinger remarks justly: "Here [in these anxieties of conscience] is to be found at least a partial psychological explanation of that wealth of bitter abuse which marks off Luther's writings from all other literary products, ancient or mediæval. . . . Not seldom he sought to deaden the interior terrors of a reproving conscience with the noisy clamour of his vituperation."[3]

[1] To the preacher, Balthasar Rhaide, Jan. 17, 1536, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 288. Cp. p. 293: "*Vides, quantas illi nobis faciant turbas, qui a nobis exierunt,*" and before this: "*Spero, quod non discedes a forma doctrinæ quam hic hausisti.*"

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 129; "Tischreden," Döllinger. "Die Reformation," 3, p. 251, erroneously quotes the passage as being in Walch: it does, however, occur in Förstemann, "Tischreden," 3, p. 136 f. The commencement is remarkable: "At times I consider the Pope and say: What after all is the Pope that I should honour him, even though you [the devil] magnify him? See what an abomination he has wrought and works even to-day! Before myself I set Christ and the forgiveness of sins, but under Satan's nose I put the abominations of the Pope. The abomination and the horror is so great that I am encouraged and am quite ready to allow that," etc.

[3] "Die Reformation," 3, p. 251.

We have just heard Luther promise to hold up the Pope's abomination to the devil's nose. This saying brings us to the principal explanation of the phenomenon under consideration.

Connection of Luther's Abusiveness with his Mystic Persuasion of his Special Call.

Luther had brought himself to such a pitch as to see in the existing Church the devil's kingdom, to overthrow which, with its Antichrist, was his own sublime mission. This theological, anti-diabolical motive for his anger and boundless invective, throws all others into the shade.

"Even were I not carried away by my hot temper and my style of writing," he says, "I should still be obliged to take the field, as I do, against the enemies of truth" ("children of the devil" he calls them elsewhere). "I am hot-headed enough, nor is my pen blunt." But these foes "revel in the most horrible crimes not merely against me, but even against God's Word." Did not Christ Himself have recourse to abuse, he asks, against the "wicked and adulterous generation of the Jews, against the brood of vipers, the hypocrites and children of the devil"? "Whoever is strong in the consciousness of the truth, can display no patience towards its furious and ferocious enemies."[1]

The more vividly he persuaded himself of his mission, the blacker were the colours in which he painted the devil of Popery who refused to believe in it, and the more strangely did there surge up from the sombre depths of his soul and permeate his whole being a hatred the like of which no mortal man had ever known before. In such outbursts Luther thinks he is "raving and raging ['*debacchari*'] against Satan"; for instance, in a letter to Melanchthon, dated from the fortress of Coburg, "from the stronghold full of devils where Christ yet reigns in the midst of His foes." Even when unable from bodily weakness to write against the devil, yet he could at least rage against him in thought and prayer; "the Pope's enormities ('*portenta*') against God and against the common weal" supplied him with material in abundance.[2]

God had appointed him, so we read elsewhere, "to teach and to instruct," as "an Apostle and Evangelist in the German lands" (were it his intention to boast); for he knows that he teaches "by the Grace of God, whose name Satan shall not destroy nor deprive me of to all eternity"; therefore I must unsparingly "expose my back parts to the devil . . . so as to enrage him still more." To the wrath of all the devils, bishops,

[1] To Spalatin, soon after Feb. 18, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 329 f.
[2] July 31, 1530, *ibid.*, 8, p. 157.

and princes he will pay as little heed as to the rustle of a bat's wing, nor will he spare the "traitors and murderers."[1]

As early as 1520 he revealed to an intimate friend the morbidly exaggerated ideas which moved him: As an excuse for his dreadful vituperation he alleges his pseudo-mystic conception of the life and death struggle he was to engage in with the devil, and his sense of the "*impetus Spiritus*"; this he pleads in extenuation to his friend, who would appear to have reminded him of the dangers of pride. "All condemn my sarcasm," he admits, but, now that the Spirit has moved him, he may set himself on a line with the "prophets" of the Old Law who "were so harsh in their invective," nay, with Paul the Apostle, whose severe censures were ever present in his mind. In fact, God Himself, according to Luther, is to some extent present in these utterances by means of His power and action, and, "sure enough, intends in this way to unmask the inventions of man.[2]

As compared with the interior force with which the idea of his mission inspired him, all his violence, particularly in his polemics with the Catholic theologians and statesmen, appeared to him far too weak. Thus his "Wider Hans Worst" against the Catholic Duke of Brunswick, though reeking of blood and hate, seemed to him to fall short of the mark and to be all too moderate, so at least he told Melanchthon, to all appearance quite seriously.[3] His inability ever to exhaust his indignation goes back to the idea expressed by him in the same letter with such startling candour and conviction as to remind one of the ravings of a man possessed by a fixed delusion: "It is certain that it is God Who is fighting." "Our cause is directed by the hand of God, not by our own wisdom. The Word makes its way and prayer glows . . . hence we might well sleep in peace were we not mere flesh." His hint at the near approach of the Last Judgment, the many signs of which could not escape notice, more than confirms the pseudo-mystic character both of his confidence and of his hate.[4]

On other occasions traces of his pet superstitions are apparent, and, when we take them together, prove beyond a doubt the unhealthy state of the mind from which they

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 261; Erl. ed., 65, p. 25; "Widder den Radschlag," etc., 1526.

[2] Aug. 19, 1520, to Wenceslaus Link, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 463.

[3] April 12, 1541, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 342: "*Miror, quid mihi acciderit, ut tam moderatus fuerim.*"

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 341: "*Certum est ipsum [Christum] pedetentim descendere de throno ad iudicium illud exspectatissimum; multa sunt nimis signa, quæ id mihi persuadent.*"

sprang. For instance, Luther professes to know particulars of the approaching end of the world concerning which the Bible says nothing; he also has that curious list of opponents miraculously slain by the Divine hand, and even fancies he can increase it by praying for the death of those who, not sharing his opinions, stood in his way: "This year we must pray Duke Maurice to death; we must slay him by our prayers, for he is likely to prove a wicked man." On the same occasion he also attributes to himself a sort of prophetic gift: "I am a prophet."[1] The foretelling of future events and the fulfilment in his own person of olden prophecies and visions, and again the many miracles and expulsions of the devil which accompany the spread of his teaching, confirm his Evangel and impress the stamp of Divine approbation on his hatred of Antichrist.[2] Divine portents, which, however, no one but Luther would have recognised as such, were also exploited: the birth of the monstrous Monk-Calf; the Pope-Ass fished from the Tiber; signs in the heavens and on the earth. The Book of Daniel and St. John's Apocalypse supplied him when necessary with the wished-for interpretation, though his far-fetched speculations would better become a mystic dreamer than a sober theologian and spiritual guide of thousands. All this was crowned by the diabolical manifestations which he himself experienced, though what he took for apparitions of the devil was merely the outcome of an overwrought mind.[3]

This enables us to seize that second nature of his, made up of superhuman storming and vituperation, and to understand, how, in his hands, wild abuse of the Papacy became quite a system.

"I shall put on my horns," he wrote to a friend in 1522, "and vex Satan until he lies stretched out on the ground. Don't be afraid, but neither expect me to spare my gainsayers; should they be hard hit by the new movement, that is not our fault, but a judgment from above on their tyranny."[4] Shortly after he wrote in a similar strain to reassure some unknown correspondent concerning his unusual methods of controversy: "Hence, my dear friend, do not wonder that many take offence at my

[1] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 3, p. 266, from the notes of one of his table-companions: Cod. Manh., 355. Coll. Camerar. v. (Ms. Bibl. Monac.), fol. 148 a.

[2] Cp. vol. iii., 148 f. See also "Luthers Briefwechsel," ed. C. A. H. Burkhardt, 1866, p. 357.

[3] Cp. our vol. vi., xxxvi., 3.

[4] To Spalatin, July 26, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 435.

writings. For it *must* be that only a few hold fast to the Gospel [the friend had pointed out to him that many of his followers were being scared away by his abuse]. . . . His Highness my master has admonished me in writing, and many other friends have done the same. But my reply is ever that I neither can nor will refrain from it."[1]

Abuse becomes almost inseparable from his teaching, or at least seems entailed by it. "Whoever accepts my teaching with a right heart," he says, "will not be scandalised by my abuse." Indeed, he adds, emulating Hus, he was ready "to risk his life should persecution or the needs of the time demand it." Nor have we any reason to doubt that his misguided enthusiasm would have rendered him capable of such a sacrifice.[2]

In 1531 the Elector Johann sent him a reprimand through Chancellor Brück on account of the two violent tracts, "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen" and "Auff das vermeint keiserlich Edict." George of Saxony had, it appears, complained to the Elector, that these writings "served in no small measure to incite to rebellion, and also contained much abuse both of high and low."[3] Hereupon Luther, with the utmost impudence, vindicated his cause to his sovereign: "That certain persons may have informed your Electoral Highness that the two writings were sharp and hasty, this is indeed true; I never meant them to be blunt and kind, and only regret that they were not more severe and violent"; for all he had said of such "lying, blasphemous, asinine" opponents—especially considering the danger in which the Electoral house stood—fell short of the mark; the Prince should bear in mind that he [Luther] had been "far too mild and soft in dealing with such evil knots and boughs."[4]

But "the knots and boughs" of his literary opponents did not consist entirely in coarse insults, but largely in the well-grounded vindication against his unwarranted attacks of the religion of their fathers, in which they saw the true basis of the common weal. His opponents had necessarily to take the defensive; Luther, with his furious words and actions, was in almost every case the aggressor, and forestalled their writings.

It is plain that, at the very time when he thus explained his position to the Elector Johann, i.e. about the time of the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, he was under the influence of that inner power of which he had said: "I am carried away I know not by what spirit"; "I am not master of myself." He exclaims: "In God's name and at His command I will tread upon the lion and adder and trample under foot the lion and dragon [it is thus

[1] Aug. 28, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 349 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 447). Cp. the letter to Spalatin of Nov. 11, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 246 f.

[2] Cp. letters of Nov. 11, 1517, and Feb., 1520, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 126, and 2, p. 345.

[3] April 13, 1531, in Seidemann, "Beitr. zur RG.," 1. p. 207; Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 8, p. 389, n. 1.

[4] April 16, 1531, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 225 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 388).

that he applies the Messianic prophecy in Ps. xc. 13]; this shall commence during my lifetime and be accomplished after my death. St. John Hus prophesied of me," etc.[1] More than ever he lays stress on the fact that he has a "Divine mission," and was "called by God to a work," not commenced "of his own initiative"; for which cause also "God was with him and assisted him."[2] He means to realise his earlier threat (1521): "If I live I shall never make peace with the Papacy; if you kill me you shall have twice as little peace. Do your worst, you swine and Thomists. Luther will be to you a bear in the road and a lion in the path [as Osee says]. He will meet you everywhere and not leave you in peace until your brazen front and stiff neck be broken, either by gentleness or by force. I have lost enough patience already; if you will not amend you may continue to rage against me and I to despise you, you abandoned monsters."[3]

He is now determined to carry out his threat of 1527 even at the cost of his life: "My teaching shall cry aloud and smite right and left; may God deny me the gifts of patience and meekness. My cry is: No, No, No, so long as I can move a muscle, let it vex King, Emperor, Princes, the devil, or whom it may. . . . Bishops, priests, monks, great Johnnies, scholars and the whole world are all thirsting for the gore of Luther, whose executioners they would gladly be, and the devil likewise and his crew. . . . My teaching is the main thing by which I defy not only princes and kings but even all the devils. I am and remain a mere sheep. . . . Not following my own conceit, I may have attacked a tyrant or great scholar and given him a cut and made him angry, but let him be ready for thirty more. . . . Let no one, least of all the tyrants and persecutors of the Evangel, expect any patience or humility from me. . . . What must not my wrath be with the Papists who are my avowed enemies? . . . Come on, all together, since you all belong to one batch, devils, Papists, fanatics, fall upon Luther! Papists from the front, fanatics from the rear, devils from every side! Chase him, hunt him down gaily, you have found the right quarry. Once Luther is down you are saved and have won the day. But I see plainly that words are of no avail; no abuse, no teaching, no exhortation, no menaces, no promises, no beseeching serve our purpose. . . . Well, then, in God's name, let us try defiance. Whoever relents, let him go; whoever is afraid, let him flee; I have at my back a strong Defender. . . . I have well served the world and brought Holy Scripture and the Word of God to light in a way unheard of for a thousand years. I have done my part; your blood be upon your own head and not on my hands!"[4]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 387; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 87, at the end of "Auff das vermeint Edict."

[2] Cp. *ibid.*, p. 386=86 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 188; "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 397, in "*Contra Henricum regem Angliæ*," 1522.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 27 ff.; Erl. ed., 30, p. 3 ff. in "Auff des Königs zu Engelland Lesterschrift," 1527.

Nevertheless, at times he appears to have had some slight qualms. Yet after having described the Papists as "Pope-Asses, slaves of the Mass, blasphemers, miscreants and murderers of souls,"[1] he continues: "Should anyone here say that I confine myself to flinging coarse epithets about me and can do nothing but slander and abuse, I would reply, firstly, that such abuse is nothing compared with the unspeakable wickedness. For what is it if I abuse the devil as a murderer, miscreant, traitor, blasphemer and liar? To him all this is but a gentle breeze! But what else are the Pope-Asses but devils incarnate, who know not penance, whose hearts are hardened and who knowingly defend their palpable blasphemy. . . . Hence my abuse is not abuse at all, but just the same as were I to call a turnip a turnip, an apple an apple, or a pear a pear."[2]

A psychological explanation of Luther's mania for invective is also to be looked for in the admixture of vile ingredients which went to make up his abuse. So frequently had he recourse to such when in a state of excitement that they must be familiar to every observer of Luther's development and general behaviour; it is, however, our duty here to incorporate this element, so characteristic of his polemics, in our sketch of the angry Luther.

The Unpleasant Seasoning of Luther's Abuse.

The filthy expressions, to which Luther was so prone when angry, are psychologically interesting, throwing light as they do on the depth of his passion and on the all too earthly atmosphere which pervades his abuse. Had Luther's one object, as writer and teacher, been to vindicate spiritual treasures he would surely have scorned to make use of such adjuncts as these in his teaching or his polemics. Even when desirous of speaking forcibly, as beseemed a man of his stamp, he would have done so without introducing these disreputable and often repulsive elements of speech. He was, however, carried away by an imagination only too familiar with such vulgar imagery, and a tongue and pen much too ready to speak or write of things of that sort. Unless he places pressure on himself a man's writings

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 311; Erl. ed., 25^{9}, p. 38, "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," 1531.

[2] *Ibid.*

give a true picture of his inner standards, and pressure was something which Luther's genius could never endure.

Luther had, moreover, a special motive for drawing his creations from this polluted well. He wished to arouse the lower classes and to ingratiate himself with those who, the less capable they were of thinking for themselves or of forming a true judgment, were all the readier to welcome coarseness, banter and the tone of the gutter. Amidst their derisive laughter he flings his filth in the face of his opponents, of the Catholics throughout the world, the Pope, the hierarchy and the German past.

If at Rome they had to prove that the Keys had been given to St. Peter "the Pope's nether garments would fare badly."[1] Of the Papal dispensation for the clergy to marry, which many confidently expected, Luther says, that it would be just the thing for the devil; "let him open his bowels over his dispensation and sling it about his neck."[2]—The Princes and nobles (those who were on the other side) "soiled their breeches so shamefully in the Peasant War that even now they can be smelt afar off."[3]—He declares of the head of the Church of Rome: "Among real Christians no one is more utterly despicable than the Pope . . . he stinks like a hoopoe's nest."[4] Of those generally who opposed the Divine Word he says: "No smell is worse than yours."[5]—"Good-bye, beloved Rome; let what stinks go on stinking."[6]

"It is stupid of the Papists to wear breeches. How if they were to get drunk and let slip a motion?"[7] This concern we find expressed in Luther's "Etliche Sprüche wider das Concilium Obstantiense" (1535). And it is quite in keeping with other utterances in the same writing. He there speaks of the "dragons' heads that peep and spew out of the hind-quarters of the Pope-Ass,"[8] and on the same page ventures to address our Saviour as follows: "Beloved Lord Jesus Christ, it is high time that Thou shouldst lay bare, back and front, the shame of the furious, bloodthirsty, purple-clad harridan and reveal it to the whole world in preparation for the dawn of Thy bright Coming."

Naturally he is no less unrestrained in his attacks on all who defended Popery. Of Eck's ideas on chastity he remarks: "Your he-goat to your nostrils smells like balsam."[9] Of Cardinal Albert of Mayence and his party he wrote, during the Schönitz

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 175.
[2] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 486; Erl. ed., 31, p. 154.
[3] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 41, p. 17.
[4] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 16, p. 469; Erl. ed., 36, p. 81.
[5] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 38, p. 176.
[6] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 7, p. 7; Erl. ed., 53, p. 46.
[7] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 31, p. 404. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 393.
[9] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 7, p. 674; Erl. ed., 27, p. 290.

controversy: These "knaves and liars" "bring out foul rags fit only for devils and men to use in the closet."[1] The epithet, merd-priest, merd-bishop, is several times applied by him to members of the Catholic hierarchy.[2] "The poor merd-priest wanted to ease himself, but, alas, there was nothing in his bowels."[3]

The Jurists who still clung to Canon Law he declares "invade the churches with their Pope like so many swine; yet there is another place whither they might more seemingly betake themselves if they wish to wipe the fundament of their Pope."[4] The Italians think that "whatever a Cardinal gives vent to, however vile it be, is a new article of faith promulgated for the benefit of the Germans."[5] To the Papists who threaten him with a Council he says: "If they are angry let them ease themselves into their breeches and sling it round their neck; that will be real balsam and pax for such thin-skinned saints."[6]—The fanatics who opposed his teaching on the Sacrament were also twitted on the score that "they would surely ease themselves on it and make use of it in the privy."[7] The Princes and scoundrel nobles faithfully followed the devil's lead, who cannot bear to listen to God's Word "but shows it his backside."[8] How are we best to answer an opponent, even the Pope? As though he were a "despicable drunkard." "Give them the fig" (i.e. make a certain obscene gesture with the fist).[9]—Such is his own remedy in all hostility and every misfortune: "I give them the fig."[10] His usual counsel is, however, to turn one's "posterior" on them.

The Pope is the "filth which the devil has dropped in the Church"; he is the "devil's bishop and the devil himself."[11]—Commenting on the Papal formula "*districte mandantes*," he adds: "Ja, in Ars."[12] They want "me to run to Rome and fetch forgiveness of sins. Yes, forsooth, an evacuation!"[13]

Of the Pope's Bull of excommunication he says "they ought to order his horrid ban to be taken to the back quarters where children of Adam go to stool; it might then be used as a pocket-handkerchief."[14]—We must seize hold of the "vices" of the Pope and his clergy and show them up as real lechers; thus should all those who hold the office of preacher "set their droppings under the very noses of the Pope and the bishops."[15] "The spirit of the Pope, the father of lies," wishes to display his wisdom by so

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 29. [2] Cp. *ibid.*, 64, p. 324.
[3] "Briefe," 6, p. 373. [4] *Ibid.*, 5, p. 622.
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed, 30, 2, p. 485; Erl. ed., 31, p. 154.
[6] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 148.
[7] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 23, p. 149; Erl. ed., 30, p. 68.
[8] *Ibid.*, 33, p. 673=48, p. 407.
[9] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 42, p. 67.
[10] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 19, p. 400; Erl. ed., 41, p. 30.
[11] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 44, p. 296. [12] *Ibid.*, 45, p. 153.
[13] *Ibid.*, 44, p. 257.
[14] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 495; Erl. ed., 31, p. 167.
[15] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 44, p. 321.

altering the Word of God, that it "reeks of his stale filth."[1]—These people, who, like the Pope, are so learned in the Scripture, are "clever sophists," experts in equine anal functions.[2] They have "taken it upon themselves to come to the assistance of the whole world with their chastity and good works, but, in reality, they merely "stuff our mouths with horse-dung."[3]

Of the alleged Papal usurpations he exclaims: "Were such muck as this stirred up in a free Council, what a stench there would be!"[4]—The same favourite figure of speech helps him against the Sacramentarians: "What useful purpose can be served by my raking up all the devil's filth?"[5]—This phrase was at least more in place when Luther, referring to Philip of Hesse's bigamy, said, that he "was not going to stir up the filth under the public nose."[6]—After their defeat he refused to comply with the demand of the peasants, that he should support them in their lawlessness: They want us to lend them a hand in "stirring up thoroughly the filth that is so eager to stink, till their mouths and noses are choked with it."[7] But it is to the Pope and his followers that, by preference, he applies such imagery. "They have forsaken the stool of St. Peter and St. Paul and now parade their filth [concerning original sin]; to such a pass have they come that they no longer believe anything, whether concerning the Gospel, or Christ, or even their own teaching."[8]—"This is the filth they now purvey, viz. that we are saved by our works; this is the devil's own poisonous tail."[9]—Of those who awaited the decision of a Council he writes: "Let the devil wait if he chooses. . . . The members of the body must not wait till the filth says and decrees whether the body is healthy or not. We are determined to learn this from the members themselves and not from the urine, excrement and filth. In the same way we shall not wait for the Pope and bishops in Council to say: This is right. For they are no part of the body, or clean and healthy members, but merely the filth of squiredom, merd spattered on the sleeve and veritable ordure, for they persecute the true Evangel, well knowing it to be the Word of God. Therefore we can see they are but filth, stench and limbs of Satan."[10]

At the time of the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, he informed the delegates of his party: "You are treating, not with men, but with the very gates of hell. . . . But they have fallen foul of the wisdom of God and [the final sentence of this Latin epistle is in German] soil themselves with their own filthy wisdom. Amen, Amen."[11]—The words "bescheissen" and "beschmeissen" (cp. popular French: "emmerder") flow naturally from Luther's

[1] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 30, pp. 3, 335; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 52.
[2] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 20^2, 2, p. 562. [3] *Ibid.*, 20^2, 1, p. 19.
[4] *Ibid.*, 25^2, p. 253.
[5] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 26, p. 429; Erl. ed., 30, p. 282.
[6] "Briefe," 6, p. 296.
[7] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 43; Erl. ed., 29, p. 378.
[8] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 44, p. 318. [9] *Ibid.*, p. 316.
[10] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 33, p. 458; Erl. ed., 48, p. 222.
[11] On June 30, 1530, to Johann Agricola, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 57.

pen. Neobulus, the Hessian defender of the bigamy, he describes as "a prince of darkness," who "has 'defiled' himself with his wisdom";[1] the papal "Jackanapes" who "declare that the Lutherans have risen in revolt," have likewise "'defiled' themselves with their sophistry."[2]

He asserts he can say "with a clear conscience that the Pope is a merd-ass and the foe of God."[3] "The Pope-Ass has emitted a great and horrible ordure here. . . . A wonder it did not tear his anus or burst his belly." "There lies the Pope in his own dung."[4] "The Popes are so fond of lies and scurrilities that their paunch waxes fat on them"; they are waiting to see "whether the Pope's motions will not ultimately scare the kings. . . . The Papal hypocrites—I had almost said the devil's excrements—boast of being masters over the whole world."[5]

Amidst these unavoidable quotations from Luther's unpleasant vocabulary of abuse the historian is confronted again and again with the question: What relation does this coarser side of Luther's style bear to the manners of his times? We have already pointed out how great the distance is between him and all other writers, particularly such as treat of religious subjects in a popular or polemical vein; obviously it is with the latter category of writings that his should be compared, rather than with the isolated aberrations of certain writers of romance or the lascivious works produced by the Humanists.[6] Various quotations from contemporaries of Luther's, even from friends of the innovations, have shown that his language both astonished and shocked them.[7] It was felt that none other could pretend to measure himself beside this giant of invective.

Duke George of Saxony on one occasion told Luther in no kindly way that he knew peasants who spoke just the same, "particularly when the worse for drink"; indeed they went one better and "knew how to use their fists"; among them Luther would be taken for a swine-herd.[8]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 207.
[2] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 468; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 125.
[3] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 216. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 216 f. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 205.
[6] Calvin also suffered, though in a less degree, from this mania for invective; of him and of the excuse some have sought in the tone and habits of the age a recent French historian says: Even though such abuse was not entirely unparalleled, "yet it cannot but surprise and grieve us in the case of a religious reformer." H. Lemonnier, "Histoire de France," ed. E. Lavisse, 5, 2, 1904, p. 230, dealing with French Calvinism. [7] See our vol. ii., p. 153 ff.
[8] In the reply "Auf das Schmähbuchlein," usw., "Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 143, published under Arnold's name.

" Their inexhaustible passion for abuse," wrote a Catholic contemporary in 1526, " makes me not a little suspicious of the teaching of this sect. No one is accounted a good pupil of Luther's who is not an adept in abusive language ; Luther's own abuse knows no bounds. . . . Who can put up with such vituperation the like of which has not been heard for ages ? . . . Read all this man's writings and you will hardly find a page that is not sullied with vile abuse."[1]

It is true that the lowest classes, particularly in Saxony, as it would appear, were addicted to the use of smutty language in which they couched their resentment or their wit ; this, however, was among themselves. In the writings of the Wittenberg professor of theology, on the other hand, this native failing emerges unabashed into the light of day, and the foul sayings which Luther—in his anxiety to achieve popularity—gathered from the lips of the rabble swept like a flood over the whole of the German literary field. Foul language became habitual, and, during the polemics subsequent on Luther's death, whether against the Catholics or among the members of the Protestant fold, was a favourite weapon of attack with those who admired Luther's drastic ways.

As early as 1522 Thomas Blaurer, a youthful student at Wittenberg, wrote : " No abuse, however low and shameful," must be spared until Popery is loathed by all.[2] Thus the object in view was to besmirch the Papacy by pelting it with mire. When, in 1558, Tilman Hesshusen, an old Wittenberg student, became Professor of Theology and General Superintendent at Heidelberg and thundered with much invective against his opponents and in favour of the Confession of Augsburg, even his friends asked the question, " whether the thousand devils he was wont to purvey from the pulpit helped to promote the pure cause of the Lutheran Evangel ? " At Bremen, preaching against Hardenberg, a follower of Melanchthon's, he declared, that he had turned the Cathedral into a den of murderers.[3] In 1593

[1] Thus F. Polygranus, O.S.F., in his "*Assertiones quorundam ecclesiæ dogmatum,*" printed at Cologne in 1571, Bl. 10 : "*insatiabilis maledicendi libido . . . a seculis inauditæ conviciorum voces.*"

[2] To Ulrich Zasius, Oct. 8, 1522, " Briefwechsel der Brüder Blaurer," 1, 1908, p. 66.

[3] Cp. " KL.," 5², col. 1958 f.

Nigrinus incited the people to abuse the Papists with the words: "Up against them boldly and fan the flames so that things may be made right warm for them!" George Steinhausen remarks in this connection in his History of German Civilisation: "Luther became quite a pattern of violent abuse and set the tone for the anti-popish ranters, who, most of them, belonged to the lowest class. On their side the Catholics, for instance, Hans Salat of Lucern or the convert Johann Engerd, were also not behindhand in this respect. . . . The preachers, however, were always intent on egging them on to yet worse attacks."[1]

The manner in which Luther in his polemics treated his opponents, wrote Döllinger in his "Sketch of Luther," "is really quite unparalleled. He never displays any of that kindly charity, which, while hating the error, seeks to win over those who err; on the contrary, with him all is abuse and anger, defiance and contemptuous scorn voiced in a tempest of invective, often of a most personal and vulgar kind. . . . It is quite wrong to say that Luther in this respect merely followed in the wake of his contemporaries; this is clear enough to everyone familiar with the literature of that age and the one which preceded it; the virulence of Luther's writings astonished everybody; those who did not owe him allegiance were not slow to express their amazement, to blame him and to emphasise the harmful effects of these outbursts of abuse, whilst his disciples and admirers were wont to appeal to Luther's 'heroic spirit' which lifted him above the common herd and, as it were, dispensed him from the observance of the moral law and allowed him to say things that would have been immoral and criminal in others."[2]

Especially his obscene abuse of the Pope did those of Luther's contemporaries who remained faithful to the Church brand as wicked, immoral and altogether unchristian. "What ears can listen to these words without being offended?" wrote Emser, "or who is the pious Christian who is not cut to the quick by this cruel insult and blasphemy offered to the vicar of Christ? Is this sort of thing Christian or Evangelical?"[3]

[1] "Gesch. der deutschen Kultur," p. 514.

[2] "Luther, eine Skizze," p. 57 f.; "KL.," 8^2, p. 343.

[3] "Wider das unchristenliche Buch M. Luthers," ed. Enders in "Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke," vol. i., 1889, p. 132.

Protestant Opinions Old and New.

Erasmus's complaints concerning Luther's abusiveness were re-echoed, though with bated breath, by those of the new faith whose passion had not entirely carried them away. The great scholar, speaking of Luther's slanders on him and his faith, had even said that they were such as to compel a reasonable reader to come to the conclusion that he was either completely blinded by hate, or suffering from some mental malady, or else possessed by the devil.[1] Many of Luther's own party agreed with Erasmus, at any rate when he wrote: "This unbridled abuse showered upon all, poisons the reader's mind, particularly in the case of the uneducated, and can promote only anger and dissension."[2]

The Protestant theologians of Switzerland were much shocked by Luther's ways. To the complaints already quoted from their letters and writings may be added the following utterances of Zwingli's successor, Heinrich Bullinger, who likewise judged Luther's offensive tone to be quite without parallel: Most of Luther's books "are cast in such a mould as to give grievous scandal to many simple folk, so that they become suspicious of the Evangelical cause as a whole. . . . His writings are for the most part nothing but invective and abuse. . . . He sends to the devil all who do not at once side with him. Thus all his censure is imbued with hostility and contains little that is friendly or fatherly." Seeing that the world already teems with abuse and curses, Bullinger thinks that it would better befit Luther "to be the salt" and to strive to mend matters, instead of which he only makes bad worse and incites his preachers to "abuse and blaspheme." "For there are far too many preachers who have sought and found in Luther's books a load of bad words. . . . From them we hear of nothing but of fanatics, rotters, Sacramentarians, foes of the Sacrament, blasphemers, scoundrels, hypocrites, rebels, devils, heretics and endless things of the like. . . . And this, too, is praised by many [who say]: Why, even Luther, the Prophet and Apostle of the Germans, does the same!"[3]

Of Luther's "Schem Hamphoras" Bullinger wrote: "Were it written, not by a famous pastor of souls, but by a swineherd," it would still be hard to excuse.[4] In a writing to Bucer, Bullinger also protested against endangering the Evangel by such unexampled abuse and invective. If no one could stop Luther

[1] "Opp.," 10, col. 1557.

[2] *Ibid.*, col. 1155: "*ista tam effrenis in omnes maledicentia*," etc.

[3] "Wahrhaffte Bekanntnuss der Dieneren an der Kilchen zu Zürych," Zürych, 1545, Bl. 130 f.

[4] *Ibid.*, Bl. 10.

then the Papists were right when they said of him, and the preachers who followed in his footsteps, that they were no "Evangelists, but rather scolding, foul-mouthed buffoons."[1]

In answer to such complaints Martin Bucer wrote to Bullinger admitting the existence of grievous shortcomings, but setting against it Luther's greatness as evinced in the admiration he called forth. The party interests of the Evangel and his hatred of the Papal Antichrist made him to regard as merely human in Luther, frailties which to others were a clear proof of his lack of a Divine mission. As Bucer puts it: "I am willing to admit what you say of Luther's venomous discourses and writings. Oh, that I could only change his ways. . . . But the fellow allows himself to be carried away by the storm that rages within him so that no one can stop him. It is God, however, Who makes use of him to proclaim His Evangel and to overthrow Antichrist. . . . He has made Luther to be so greatly respected in so many Churches that no one thinks of opposing him, still less of removing him from his position. Most people are proud of him, even those whom he does not acknowledge as his followers; many admire and copy his faults rather than his virtues; but huge indeed is the multitude of faithful who revere him as the Apostle of Christ. . . . I too give him the first place in the sacred ministry. It is true there is much about him that is human, but who is there who displays nothing but what is Divine?" In spite of all he was a great tool of God ("*admirandum organum Dei pro salute populi Dei*"); such was the opinion of all pious and learned men who really knew him.[2]

Yet Bucer had some strong things to say to Landgrave Philip of Hesse, regarding Luther's addiction to abuse. To try and persuade him to deal courteously with his foes, particularly with the Zürichers after their "mistaken booklet," so Bucer writes to the Prince, "would be like trying to put out a fire with oil. If Master Philip and I—who have kept rigidly and loyally to the Concord—succeed in turning away the man's wrath from ourselves, then we shall esteem ourselves lucky." The "foolhardiness" of the Zürichers has "so enraged him, that even Emperors, though they should be good Evangelicals, would find it hard to pacify him." "No one has ever got the better of Dr. Luther in invective."[3]

Fresh light is thrown on the psychological side of Luther's controversial methods when we bring together those utterances in which his sense of his own greatness finds expression. We must observe a little more closely Luther's inner thoughts and feelings from the standpoint of his own ideal.

[1] To Bucer, 1543, Lenz, "Briefwechsel Philipps," 2, p. 224. Another remark of Bullinger's is given above, vol. iii., p. 417.

[2] To Bullinger, 1543, Lenz, *ibid.*, p. 226. Cp. what Bucer said, in our vol. ii., p. 155.

[3] On May 19, 1545, Lenz, *ibid.*, p. 343.

4. Luther on his own Greatness and Superiority to Criticism The art of "Rhetoric"

Characteristic utterances of Luther's regarding his own gifts and excellencies, the wisdom and courage displayed in his undertaking and the important place he would occupy in history as the discoverer and proclaimer of the Evangelical truth, are to be met with in such plenty, both in his works and in the authentic notes of his conversations, that we have merely to select some of the most striking and bring them together. They form a link connecting his whole public career; he never ceased to regard all his labours from the point of view of his Divine mission, and what he says merely varies in tone and colour with the progress which took place in his work as time went on.

It is true that he knew perfectly well that it was impossible to figure a Divine mission without the pediment and shield of humility. How indeed could those words of profound humility, so frequent with St. Paul, have rung in Luther's ears without finding some echo? Hence we find Luther, too, from time to time making such his own; and this he did, not out of mere hypocrisy, but from a real wish to identify his feelings with those of the Apostle; in almost every instance, however, his egotism destroys any good impulse and drives him in the opposite direction.

Luther's confessions of his faults and general unworthiness are often quite impressive. We may notice that such were not unfrequently made to persons of influence, to Princes and exalted patrons on whom his success depended, and whom he hoped thereby to dispose favourably; others, however, are the natural, communicative outpourings of that "colossal frankness"—as it has been termed—which posterity has to thank for its knowledge of so many of Luther's foibles. In his conversations we sometimes find him speaking slightingly of himself, for instance, when he says: "Philip is of a better brand than I. He fights and teaches; I am more of a rhetorician or gossip."[1]

A passage frequently quoted by Luther's admirers in proof of his humility is that which occurs in his preface to the "Psalter" published by Eobanus Hessus. The Psalms, he says, had been his school from his youth upwards. "While unwilling to put my gifts before those of others, I may yet boast with a holy presumption, that I would not, as they say, for all the thrones and kingdoms of the world, forgo the benefits, that, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, I have derived from lingering and

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 279, Table-Talk.

meditating on the Psalms." He was not going to hide the gifts he had received from God, and in Him he would be proud, albeit in himself he found reasons enough to make him humble; he took less pleasure in his own German Psalter than in that of Eobanus, "but all to the honour and glory of God, to Whom be praise for ever and ever."[1]

In order to know Luther as he really was we should observe him amongst his pupils at Wittenberg, for instance, as he left the Schlosskirche after one of his powerful sermons to the people, and familiarly addressed those who pressed about him on the steps of the church. There were the burghers and students whose faults he had just been scourging; the theologians of his circle crowding with pride around their master; the lawyers, privy councillors and Court officials in the background, probably grumbling under their breath at Luther's peculiarities and harsh words. His friends wish him many years of health and strength that he may continue his great work in the pulpit and press; he, on the other hand, thinks only of death; he insists on speaking of his Last Will and Testament, of the chances of his cause, of his enemies and of the threatened Council which he so dreaded.[2]

[1] On Aug. 1, 1537, "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 255, printed in the 2nd edition of the Psalter of Hessus of 1538.—The following remark of Luther's on those who wanted to call themselves after him has also been quoted: "Fool that you are, just listen: First of all I beg people to leave my name out and to call themselves, not Lutherans, but Christians. What has Luther to do with it? The doctrine is not mine, nor was I ever crucified for anyone. St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. [4, 5], would not hear of Christians being called Pauline or Petrine, but simply Christians. How then should I, poor smelly sack of maggots that I am, suffer the children of Christ to be called by my unholy name? Hence, dear friend, let us do away with party names and be called after Christ, Whose teaching we follow. It is only right that the Papists should have a party name, because they are not content with Christ's teaching and name, but insist on being Popish; let them then be the Pope's, since he is their master. As for me, I neither am nor wish to be anyone's master. I share with the congregation the teaching of Christ Who alone is our Master. Mt. xxiii. [8]." "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 685; Erl. ed., 22, p. 55 f., "Vormanung sich zu vorhuten fur Auffruhr," 1522. He blames those who, by their stupid zeal, "cause calumny and a falling away from the holy Evangel," and "affright" the people and prevent their accepting it. Just then it was to his interest to represent his teaching as peaceable and his action as moderate. Cp. pp. 677, 682 f.=46, 51, 53.

[2] We have chosen this somewhat unusual setting for the following collection of Luther's sayings in order to prevent monotony. The texts, indeed, belong to various times, but there are periods in Luther's history, for instance, about the time of the Diet of Augsburg, and in

" Let me be," Luther cries, turning to the lawyers, " even in my Last Will, the man I really am, one well known both in heaven and on earth, and not unknown in hell, standing in sufficient esteem and authority to be trusted and believed in more than any notary; for God, the Father of Mercies, has entrusted to me, poor, unworthy, wretched sinner that I am, the Gospel of His Dear Son and has made and hitherto kept me faithful and true to it, so that many in the world have accepted it through me, and consider me a teacher of the truth in spite of the Pope's ban and the wrath of Emperors, Kings, Princes, priests and all the devils. . . . Dr. Martin Luther, God's own notary and the witness of His Gospel."[1]

I am " Our Lord Jesus Christ's unworthy evangelist."[2]

I am " the Prophet of the Germans, for such is the haughty title I must henceforth assume."[3]

" I am Ecclesiastes by the Grace of God " ; " Evangelist by the Grace of God."[4]

" I must not deny the gifts of Jesus Christ, viz. that, however small be my acquaintance with Holy Scripture, I understand it a great deal better than the Pope and all his people."[5]

" I believe that we are the last trump that sounds before Christ's coming."[6]

Many arise against me, but with " a breath of my mouth " I blow them over.—All their prints are mere " autumn leaves."[7]

" One only of my opponents, viz. Latomus, is worth his salt, he is the scribe who writes best against me. Latomus alone has really written against Luther, make a note of that! All the others, like Erasmus, were but frogs. Not one of them really meant it seriously. Yes indeed all, Erasmus included, were just croaking frogs."[8]

1540 and 1541, when, within a short chronological space, he contrived to make a vast number of statements regarding his greatness; for this reason the above arrangement is not altogether untrue to the reality.

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. 2, and " Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5. p. 422. Words taken from his Will of Jan. 6, 1542, by which he intended to show the lawyers (who questioned his power to make a valid Will on account of his marriage) that he was not bound by the formalities on which they insisted.

[2] " Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 366; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 75.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 290=22.

[4] *Ibid.*, 10, 2, p. 105=28, p. 143.

[5] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 26^2, p. 124.

[6] " Briefe," 5, p. 754.

[7] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 101.

[8] Mathesius, " Aufzeichnungen," p. 70.

I have been tried in the school of temptations; "these are the exalted temptations which no Pope has ever understood," I mean, "being tempted to blasphemy and to question God's Judgments when we know nothing either of sin or of the remedy."[1]

Because I have destroyed the devil's kingdom "many say I was the man foretold by the Prophet of Lichtenberg; for in their opinion I must be he. This was a prophecy of the devil, who well saw that the kingdom he had founded on lies must fall. Hence he beheld a monk, though he could not tell to which Order he belonged."[2]

"Be assured of this, that no one will give you a Doctor of Holy Scripture save only the Holy Ghost who is in heaven. . . . He indeed testified aforetimes against the prophet by the mouth of the she-ass on which the prophet rode. Would to God we were worthy to have such doctors sent us!"[3]

"I have become a great Doctor, this I am justified in saying; I would not have thought this possible in the days of my temptations" when Staupitz comforted me with the assurance, "that God would make use of me as His assistant in mighty things."[4]

"St. John Hus" was not alone in prophesying of me that . . . "they will perforce have to listen to the singing of a swan," but likewise the prophet at Rome foretold "the coming hermit who would lay waste the Papacy."[5]

When I was a young monk and lay sick at Erfurt they said to me: "Be consoled, good bachelor . . . our God will still make a great man of you. This has been fulfilled."[6]

"On one occasion when I was consoling a man on the loss of his son he, too, said to me: 'You will see, Martin, you will become a great man!' I often call this to mind, for such words have something of the omen or oracle about them."[7]

"Small and insignificant as they [Luther's and the preachers' reforms] are, they have done more good in the

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 143. Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 442. See above, vol. iii., p. 165 f.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 460; Erl. ed., 21, p. 349. "An den christl. Adel," 1520.

[4] "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 159.

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 387; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 87. See above, vol. iii., p. 165.

[6] Mathesius, "Historien," p. 4.

[7] "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 160.

Churches than all the Popes and lawyers with all their decrees."[1]

"No one has expounded St. Paul better" than you, Philip (Melanchthon). "The commentaries of St. Jerome and Origen are the merest trash in comparison with your annotations" (on Romans and Corinthians). "Be humble if you like, but at least let me be proud of you." "Be content that you come so near to St. Paul himself."[2]

"In Popery such darkness prevailed that they taught neither the Ten Commandments, nor the Creed, nor the Our Father; such knowledge was considered quite superfluous."[3]

"The blindness was excessive, and unless those days had been shortened we should all have grown into beasts! I fear, however, that after us it will be still worse, owing to the dreadful contempt for the Word."[4]

"Before my day nothing was known," not even "what parents or children were, or what wife or maid."[5]

"Such was then the state of things: No one taught, or had heard or knew what secular authority was, whence it came, or what its office and task was, or how it must serve God."—"But I wrote so usefully and splendidly concerning the secular authorities as no teacher has ever done since Apostolic times, save perhaps St. Augustine; of this I may boast with a good conscience, relying on the testimony of the whole world."[6]

Similarly, "we could prove before the whole world that we have preached much more grandly and powerfully of good works than those very people who abuse us."[7]

"Not one of the Fathers ever wrote anything remarkable or particularly good concerning matrimony. . . . In marriage they saw only evil luxury. . . . They fell into the ocean of sensuality and evil lusts." "But [by my preaching] God with His Word and by His peculiar Grace has restored, before the Last Day, matrimony, secular authority and the preaching office to their rightful position, as He

[1] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 716.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 309 f.; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 491; "Briefe," 2, p. 238 ("Briefewechsel," 3, p. 438).

[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 151. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 317; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 46 f.

[6] *Ibid.*, 30, 2, p. 109 f.=31, p. 34 f. "Vom Kriege widder die Türcken," 1529.

[7] *Ibid.*, 36, p. 447=18^2, p. 334. Sermon of 1532.

instituted and ordained them, in order that we might behold His own institutions in what hitherto had been but shams."[1]

The Papists "know nothing about Holy Scripture, or what God is . . . or what Baptism or the Sacrament."[2] But thanks to me "we now have the Gospel almost as pure and undefiled as the Apostles had it."[3]

"Not for a thousand years has God bestowed such great gifts on any bishop as He has on me; for it is our duty to extol God's gifts."[4]

It is easy to understand what an impression such assurances and such appeals to the heavenly origin of his gifts must have made on enthusiastic pupils. Before allowing the speaker to continue we may perhaps set on record what one of his defenders alleges in Luther's favour.[5] "An energetic character to whom all pretence is hateful may surely speak quite freely and openly of his own merits and capabilities." "Why should such a thing seem strange? Because now, among well-bred people, conventions demand that, even should we be conscious of good deeds and qualities in ourselves, we should nevertheless speak as though unaware of them." Luther, however, was "certain that he had found the centre of all truth, and that he possessed it as his very own; he knew that by his 'faith' he had become something, viz. that which every man ought to become according to the will of God. This explains that self-reliance whereby he felt himself raised above those who either continued to withstand the truth, or else had not yet discovered it." By such utterances he "only wished to explain why he feared nothing for his cause." "Arrogance and self-conceit are sinful, but he who by God's grace really is something must feel proud and self-reliant." "The only question is whether it is a proof of pride that he was not altogether oblivious of this, and that he himself occasionally spoke of it." "Christ and Paul knew what they were and openly proclaimed it. Just as Christ found Himself accused of arrogance, so Paul, too, felt that his boasting would be misunderstood." Besides, "Luther, because the title prophet [which he had applied to himself] was open to misconstruction, writes elsewhere: 'I do not say that I am a prophet.'"[6]

[1] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 61, p. 178, Table-Talk.
[2] Cp. vol. iii., p. 131 f., and above, p. 102.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 39; Erl. ed., 22, p. 184.
[4] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 61, p. 422.
[5] W. Walther, "Für Luther, wider Rom," pp. 526–543.
[6] Other Protestant writers are of a different opinion. Friedrich Paulsen says in his "Gesch. des Unterrichts," 1^2, 1896, p. 178: "It is certain that humility towards men, respect for human wisdom and human laws, did not enter into Luther's make. He is altogether deficient in that humility towards the actual Church which is so characteristic of St. Augustine, Luther's great predecessor in theology.

The comparison between Christ's sayings and Luther's had best be quietly dropped. As to the parallel with the Apostle of the Gentiles—his so-called boasting (2 Cor. xi. 16; xii. 1 ff.) and his frequent and humble admissions of frailty—St. Paul certainly has no need to fear comparison with Luther. He could have set before the world other proofs of his Divine mission, and yet he preferred to make the most humble confessions:

"But for myself I will glory in nothing but in my infirmities," says Paul . . . "gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may dwell in me; for which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ. For when I am weak then am I powerful . . . although I be nothing, yet the signs of my apostleship have been wrought in you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." "For I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am and His grace hath not been void, but I have laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I but the grace of God with me." "But we became little ones in the midst of you, as if a nurse should cherish her children: so desirous of you, we would gladly impart unto you not only the Gospel of God but also our own souls because you were become most dear to us. . . . You are our glory and joy" (2 Cor. xii. 5 ff.; 1 Cor. xv. 9; 1 Thess. ii. 7 ff.).

"God has appointed me for the whole of the German land," Luther continues, "and I boldly vouch and declare that when you obey me in this [the founding of Evangelical schools] you are without a doubt obeying not me but Christ, and that, whoever obeys me not, despises, not me, but Christ [Luke xx. 16]. For I know well and am certain of what and whereto I speak and teach."[1]

"And now, dear Germans, I have told you enough; you have heard your prophet; God grant we may obey His words."[2]

As Germany does not obey "misery" must needs overtake it; "when I pray for my beloved Germany I feel that my prayer recoils on me and will not ascend upwards as it does when I pray for other things. . . . God grant that I be wrong and a false prophet in this matter."[3]

The more Luther, during the course of his life, passes from the position of a mere heretic to that of head of a new Church, the more does that formula [My cause is God's own] become tinged with bitterness, with obstinacy and with pride."

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 27 f.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 171. "An die Radherrn," etc., 1524.

[2] *Ibid.*, 30, 2, p. 588=17², p. 421. "Das man Kinder zur Schulen halten solle," 1530.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 585 f.=420.

"Our Lord God had to summon Moses six times; me, too, He has led in the same way. . . . Others who lived before me attacked the wicked and scandalous life of the Pope; but I assailed his very doctrine and stormed in upon the monkery and the Mass, on which two pillars the whole Papacy rests. I could never have foreseen that these two pillars would fall, for it was almost like declaring war on God and all creation."[1]

"I picked the first fruits of the knowledge and faith of Christ, viz. that we are justified by faith in Christ and not by works."[2]

"I am he to whom God first revealed it."[3]

"Show me a single passage on justification by faith in the Decrees, Decretals, Clementines, "*Liber Sextus*" or "*Extravagantes*," in any of the Summas, books of Sentences, monkish sermons, synodal definitions, collegial or monastic Rules, in any Postils, in any work of Jerome and Gregory, in any decisions of the Councils, in any disputations of the theologians, in any lectures of any University, in any Mass or Vigil of any Church, in any "*Cæremoniale Episcoporum*," in the institutes of any monastery, in any manual of any confraternity or guild, in any pilgrims' book anywhere, in the pious exercises of any Saint, in any Indulgence, Bull, anywhere in the Papal Chancery or the Roman Curia or in the Curia of any bishop. And yet it was there that the doctrine of faith should have been expressed in all its fulness."[4]

"My Evangel," that was what was wanting. "I have, praise be to God, achieved more reformation by my Evangel than they probably would have done even by five Councils. . . . Here comes our Evangel . . . and works wonders, which they themselves accept and make use of, but which they could not have secured by any Councils."[5]

"I believe I have summoned such a Council and effected such a reformation as will make the ears of the Papists tingle and their heart burst with malice. . . . In brief: It is Luther's own Reformation."[6]

[1] *Ibid.*, 62, p. 443 f., Table-Talk.
[2] "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 20. Preface to the edition of the Latin works (1545).
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 8; Erl. ed., 28, p. 212.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 445 f., Table-Talk (in Latin).
[5] *Ibid.*, 31, p. 389 f. "Ein Brieff von seinem Buch der Winckelmessen," 1534.
[6] *Ibid.*, 63, pp. 271, 274, Table-Talk.

" I, who am nothing, may say with truth that during the [twenty] years that I have served my dear Lord Christ in the preaching office, I have had more than twenty factions opposing me " ; but now they are, some of them, extirpated, others, " like worms with their heads trodden off."[1]

" I have now become a wonderful monk, who, by God's grace, has deposed the Roman devil, viz. the Pope ; yet not I, but God through me, His poor, weak instrument ; no emperor or potentate could have done that."[2]

In point of fact " the devil is not angry with me without good reason, for I have rent his kingdom asunder. What not one of the kings and princes was able to do, that God has effected, through me, a poor beggar and lonely monk."[3]

How poor are the ancient Fathers in comparison ! " Chrysostom was a mere gossip. Jerome, the good Father, and lauder of nuns, understood precious little of Christianity. Ambrose has indeed some good sayings. If Peter Lombard had only happened upon the Bible he would have excelled all the Fathers."[4]

" See what darkness prevailed among the Fathers of the Church concerning faith ! Once the article concerning justification was obscured it became impossible to stem the course of error. St. Jerome writes on Matthew, on Galatians and on Titus, but how paltry it all is ! Ambrose wrote six books on Genesis, but what poor stuff they are ! Augustine never writes powerfully on faith except when assailing the Pelagians. . . . They left not a single commentary on Romans and Galatians that is worth anything. Oh, how great, on the other hand, is our age in purity of doctrine, and yet, alas, we despise it ! The holy Fathers taught better than they wrote ; we, God be praised, write better than we live." Had Gregory the Great at least refrained from spoiling what remained ! " He broke in with his pestilent traditions, bound men down to observances concerning flesh-meat, cowls and Masses, and imposed on them his filthy, merdiferous law. And in the event this dreadful state of things grew from day to day worse."[5]

" On the other hand, it is plain that I may venture to

[1] Preface to his Commentary on Galatians, Irmischer, 1, p. 9.
[2] " Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 243.
[3] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 143.
[4] Mathesius, " Historien," p. 153.
[5] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 123.

boast in God, without arrogance or untruth, that, when it comes to the writing of books I am not far behind many of the Fathers."[1]

" In short the fault lay in this, that [before I came], even in the Universities the Bible was not read; when it was read at all it had to be interpreted in accordance with Aristotle. What blindness that was!"[2]

But then my translation of Holy Scripture appeared. Whereas the Schoolmen never were acquainted with Scripture, indeed " never were at home even in the Catechism,"[3] all admit my Bible scholarship. On one occasion " Carlstadt said to the Doctors at Wittenberg: My dear sirs, Dr. Martin is far too learned for us; he read the Bible ten years ago and now if we read it for ten years, he will then have read it for twenty; in any case, therefore, we are lost." " Don't start disputing with him."[4]

" Nevertheless I never should have attained to the great abundance of Divine gifts, which I am forced to confess and admit, unless Satan had tried me with temptations; without these temptations pride would have cast me into the abyss of hell."[5]

" The Papists are blind to the clear light of truth because it was revealed by a man. As though Elias, who wrought such great things against the servants of Baal, was not likewise a man and a beggar. As though John the Baptist, who so brilliantly put to flight the Pharisees, was not a man too. One's being a man does not matter provided one be a man of God. For heroes are not merely men."[6]

Certain statements of contemporaries, both Catholics and Protestants, sound like interjections in the midst of Luther's discourse. They point out how unheard-of was his demand that faith should be placed in him alone to the exclusion of all Christian authorities past and present. " What unexampled pride is this," exclaims the learned Ulrich Zasius, who in earlier days had favoured Luther's more moderate plans of reform, " when a man demands that his interpretation of the Bible should be given precedence over that of the Fathers of the Church herself, and of the whole of Christendom!"[7] " He has stuck himself in the

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 403, Preface, 1539.
[2] Schlaginhaufen, " Aufzeichnungen," p. 121.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[4] *Ibid.*, from Veit Dietrich's " Aufzeichnungen."
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[6] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 123.
[7] To Ambros. Blaurer, Dec. 21, 1521, " Briefwechsel der Brüder Blaurer," 1, p. 42 ff. R. Stintzing, " Ulr. Zasius," 1857, p. 231, Cp. p. 371.

Pope's place," cries Thomas Münzer, and does the grand as though, forsooth, he had not come into the world in the ordinary way, but "had sprung from the brain." "Make yourself cosy in the Papal chair," is Valentine Ickelsamer's comment, since you are determined to "listen only to your own song."[1]

Luther concludes his address to his followers by replying first of all to the frequent objection we have just heard Zasius bring forward:

"I, Dr. Martin Luther by name, have taken it upon me to prove for further instruction each and every article in a well-grounded work. . . . But first I must answer certain imputations made by some against me." "They twit me with coming forward all alone and seeking to teach everybody. To this I reply that I have never put myself forward and would have been glad to creep into a corner; they it is who dragged me out by force and cunning."[2]

"But who knows whether God has not raised me up and called me to this, and whether they have not cause to fear that they are contemning God in me? Do we not read in the Old Testament that God, as a rule, raised up only one prophet at a time? Moses was alone when he led the people out of Egypt; Helias was alone in the time of King Achab; later on Helisæus was also alone; Isaias was alone in Jerusalem, Oseas in Israel, Hieremias in Judea, Ezechiel in Babylon, and so on."[3]

"The dear Saints have always had to preach against and reprove the great ones, the kings, princes, priests and scholars."[4]

"I do not say that I am a prophet, but I do say that the Papists have the more reason to fear I am one, the more they despise me and esteem themselves. God is wonderful in His works and judgments. . . . If I am not a prophet yet I am certain within myself that the Word of God is with me and not with them; for I have Scripture on my side, but they, only their own doctrine."[5]

"There were plenty donkeys in the world in Balaam's time, yet God did not speak through all of them, but only through Balaam's ass."[6] "They also say that I bring forward new things, and that it is not to be supposed that

[1] Münzer and Ickelsamer in our vol. ii., p. 377.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 310 f.; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 57. "Grund und Ursach aller Artickel," 1521. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 311=58.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*, p. 313=59. [6] *Ibid.*

all others were in the wrong for so long. To this reproof the ancient prophets also had to listen. . . . Christ's teaching was different from what the Jews had heard for a thousand years. On the strength of this objection the heathen, too, might well have despised the Apostles, seeing that their ancestors had believed otherwise for more than three thousand years."[1]

"I say that all Christian truth had perished amongst those who ought to have been its upholders, viz. the bishops and learned men. Yet I do not doubt that the truth has survived in some hearts, even though only in those of babes in the cradle."[2]

"I do not reject them [all the Doctors of the Church] . . . but I refuse to believe them except in so far as they prove their contentions from that Scripture which has never erred. . . . Necessity forces us to test every Doctor's writings by the Bible and to judge and decide upon them. The standing as well as the number of my foes is to me a proof that I am in the right."[3]

"Were I opposed only by a few insignificant men I should know that what I wrote and taught was not from God. . . . Truth has ever caused disturbance, and false teachers have ever cried 'Peace, peace.'"[4]

"They say they don't want to be reformed by such a beggar. . . ." "Daniel has arisen in his place and is determined to perform what the angel Gabriel has pointed out to him; for the same prophet told us how he would rise up at the end of the world. That he is now doing." "God has made Luther a Samson over them; He is God and His ways are wonderful. . . . Let good people say the best they can of me and let the Papists talk and lie to their hearts' content."[5]

Neither councils nor reformations will help them. "They wish to reform and govern the Church according to their own lights and by human wisdom; but that is something that lies far above the counsel of men. When our Lord God wished to reform His Church He did so '*divinitus*,' not by human methods; thus it was at the time of Josue, of the Judges, Samuel, the Apostles and also in my own time."[6]

[1] *Ibid.* [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 315=61.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 317=61 f. [5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 31, p. 389 f.
[6] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 186.

Even should our work be frustrated, yet the "power of the Almighty could make a new Luther out of nothing." In this wise "God raised up Noe when He was obliged to destroy the world by the deluge. And, in Abraham's time, when the whole world was plunged in darkness and under the empire of Satan, Abraham and his seed came as a great light; and He drowned King Pharao and slew seven great nations in Canaan. And again when Caiphas crucified the Son of God . . . He rose again from the dead and Caiphas was brought to nought."[1]

"Christ was not so greatly considered, nor had He ever such a number of hearers as the Apostles had and we now have; Christ Himself said to His disciples: 'You will do greater works than I,' and, truly enough, at the time of the Apostles, and now amongst us, the Gospel and the Divine Word is preached much more powerfully and is more widely spread than at the time of Christ."[2]

It is true that "my conviction is, that, for a thousand years, the world has never loathed anyone so much as me. I return its hatred."[3]

It "is probable that my name stinks in the nostrils of many who wish to belong to us, but you [Bugenhagen] will put things right without my troubling." Formerly the decisions of the Councils ranked above God's Word, "but now, thank God, this would not be believed among us even by ducks or geese, mice or lice." "God has no liking for the 'expectants' [those who looked for a Council], for He will have His Word honoured above all angels, let alone men or Councils, and will have no waiting or expectancy. Our best plan will be to send them to the devil in the abyss of hell, to do their waiting there."[4]

"So the Council is going to be held at Trent. Tridentum, however, signifies in German, 'divided, torn asunder, dissolved,' for God will scatter it and its Legates. I believe they do not know what they are doing or what they mean to do. God has cursed them with blindness."[5] "Nay, under Satan's rule they have all gone mad; they condemn us and then want our approval."[6] "The Council is worthy of its monsters. May misfortune fall upon them; the wrath

[1] "Briefe," 6, p. 402.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 94.
[3] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 113.
[4] "Briefe," 5, p. 418 f. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 743. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 746.

of God is verily at their heels."[1] "They look upon us as donkeys, and yet do not realise their own dense stupidity and malice."[2]

"Should we fall, then Christ will fall with us, the ruler of the world. Granted, however, that He is to fall, I would rather fall with Christ than stand with the Emperor." "Put your trust in your Emperor and we will put our trust in ours [in Christ], and wait and see who holds the field. Let them do their best, they have not yet got their way." They shall perish. "I fear they wish to hear those words of Julius Cæsar: 'They themselves have willed it!'"[3]

Should I be carried to the grave, for instance, as a victim of the religious war, people will say at the sight of the Popish rout that will ensue: "Dr. Martin was escorted to his grave by a great procession. For he was a great Doctor, above all bishops, monks and parsons, therefore it was fitting that they should all follow him into the grave, and furnish a subject for talk and song. And to end up, we shall all make a little pilgrimage together; they, the Papists, to the bottomless pit to their god of lying and murder, whom they have served with lies and murders; I to my Lord, Jesus Christ, Whom I have served in truth and peace; . . . they to hell in the name of all the devils, I to heaven in God's name."[4]

No mortal ever spoke of himself as Luther did. He reveals himself as a man immeasurably different from that insipid portrait which depicts him as one who made no claim on people's submission to his higher light and higher authority, but who humbly advanced what he fancied he had discovered, an ordinary human being, even though a great one, who was only at pains to convince others by the usual means in all wisdom and charity. Everyday psychology does not avail to explain the language Luther used, and we are faced by the graver question of the actual condition of such a mind, raised so far above the normal level. "We have," says Adolf Harnack, "to choose between two alternatives: Either he suffered from the

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 750. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 777.

[3] To Melanchthon, June 30, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 51 f., during the Diet of Augsburg.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 279; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 8.

mania of greatness, or his self-reliance really corresponded with his task and achievements."[1]

Luther, at the very commencement of the tract which he published soon after leaving the Wartburg, and in which he describes himself as "Ecclesiastes by the grace of God," says: "Should you, dear Sirs, look upon me as a fool for my assumption of so haughty a title," I should not be in the least surprised; he adds, however: "I am convinced of this, that Christ Himself, Who is the Master of my teaching, calls me thus and regards me as such"; his "Word, office and work" had come to him "from God," and his "judgment was God's own" no less than his doctrine.[2] The bishops of the Catholic world may well have raised their eyebrows at the tone of this work, couched in the form of a Bull and addressed to all the "Popish bishops"; the following year it was even reprinted in Latin at Wittenberg in order to make it known throughout the world. Bossuet's words on the opening lines of the tract well render the feeling of apprehension they must have created: "Hence Luther's is the same call as St. Paul's, no less direct and no less extraordinary! . . . And on the strength of this Divine mission Luther proceeds to reform the Church!"[3]—We should, however, note that Luther, in his extraordinary demands, goes far beyond any mere claim to a Divine call. A heavenly vocation might perfectly well have been present without any such haughty treading under foot of the past, without any such conceit as to his own and his fellow-workers' achievements, and without all this boasting of prophecies, of victories over fanatics and devils, and of world-wide fame, rather, a true vocation would dread anything of the kind. Hence, in the whole series of statements we have quoted, commencing with the title of Ecclesiastes by the Grace of God, which he adopted soon after his Wart-

[1] "Theol. Literaturztng.," 1911, No. 10, col. 304. Harnack adds: "Towards God he remained humble; this humility was, however, couched in a language which must have affrighted the monkish devotees."

[2] "Wyder den falsch genantten Standt des Bapst und der Bischoffen," with the sub-title: "Martin Luther, by God's grace Ecclesiastes at Wittenberg, to the Popish Bishops my service and to them knowledge in Christ." "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 105 ff.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 142 ff. The book was partly written at the Wartburg (see Introd. in the Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 93 f.), and was published in 1522, probably in Aug.

[3] Bossuet, "Hist. des variations," Paris ed., 1702, 1, p. 26.

burg " baptism," we find not only the consciousness of a mission conferred on him at the Wartburg, but also an altogether unique idea of his own greatness which no one who wishes to study Luther's character must lose sight of. We shall have, later on, to ask ourselves whether those were in the right who looked upon this manifestation as a sign of disease.

Luther's language would be even more puzzling were it not certain that much that he said was not really meant seriously. With him rhetoric plays a greater rôle than is commonly admitted, and even some of his utterances regarding his own greatness are clearly flowers of rhetoric written half in jest.

Luther himself ingenuously called his art of abusing all opponents with the utmost vigour, " *rhetorica mea.*" This he did in those difficult days when it was a question of finding some means of escape in connection with the threatening Diet of Augsburg : " By my rhetoric I will show the Papists that they, who pretend to be the champions of the faith and the Gospel, have there [at Augsburg] made demands of us which are contrary to the Gospel ; verily I shall fall upon them tooth and nail. . . . Come, Luther most certainly will, and with great pomp set free the eagle [the Evangel] now held caught in the snare (' *aquilam liberaturus magnifice* ')."[1] So much did he trust his rhetorical talent that on another occasion he told the lawyers : " If I have painted you white, then I can equally well paint you black again and make you look like regular devils."[2] Amidst the embarrassments subsequent on Landgrave Philip's bigamy Luther's one ray of hope was in his consciousness, that he could easily manage to " extricate " himself with the help of his pen ; at the same time, when confiding this to the Landgrave, he also told him quite openly, that, should he, the Landgrave, " start a literary feud " with him, Luther would soon " leave him sticking in the mud."[3]

We have already heard him say plainly : " I have more in me of the rhetorician or the gossip " ;[4] he adds that his only writings which were strictly doctrinal were his commentaries on Galatians

[1] To Spalatin, Aug. 28, 1530, " Briefwechsel," 8, p. 232.
[2] " Werke," Erl. ed., 26, p. 275.
[3] Above, p. 58.
[4] Above, p. 327.

and on Deuteronomy and his sermons on four chapters of the Gospel of St. John; all the rest the printers might well pass over, for they merely traced the history of his conflict; the truth being that his doctrine "had not been so clear at first as it is now." And yet he had formerly written much on doctrine; as he once said in a conversation recorded in Schlaginhaufen's notes of 1532: "I don't care for my Psalter, it is long and garrulous. Formerly I was so eloquent that I wanted to talk the whole world to death. Now I can do this no longer, for the thoughts won't come. Once upon a time I could talk more about a little flower than I now could about a whole meadow. I am not fond of any superfluity of words. Jonas replied: The Psalter [you wrote] is, however, of the Holy Ghost and pleases me well."[1]

That he avoided "any superfluity of words" later in life is not apparent. What he says of himself in the Table-Talk, viz. that he resembled an Italian in liveliness and wealth of language, holds good of him equally at a later date; on the other hand, his remark, that Erasmus purveyed "words without content" and he content without words,[2] is not true of the facts.

An example of his rhetorical ability to enlarge upon a thought is found in the continuation of the sentence already mentioned (p. 331): "Before my day nothing was known."

"Formerly no one knew what the Gospel was, what Christ, or baptism, or confession, or the Sacrament was, what faith, what spirit, what flesh, what good works, the Ten Commandments, the Our Father, prayer, suffering, consolation, secular authority, matrimony, parents or children were, what master, servant, wife, maid, devils, angels, world, life, death, sin, law, forgiveness, God, bishop, pastor, or Church was, or what was a Christian, or what the cross; in fine, we knew nothing whatever of all a Christian ought to know. Everything was hidden and overborne by the Pope-Ass. For they are donkeys, great, rude, unlettered donkeys in Christian things. . . . But now, thank God, things are better and male and female, young and old, know the Catechism. . . . The things mentioned above have again emerged into the light." The Papists, however, "will not suffer any one of these things. . . . You must help us [so they say] to prevent anyone from learning the Ten Commandments, the Our Father and Creed; or about baptism, the Sacrament, faith, authority, matrimony or the Gospel. . . . You must lend us a hand so that, in place of marriage, Christendom may again be filled with fornication, adultery and other unnatural and shameful vices."[3]

A particular quality of Luther's "rhetoric" was its exaggeration. By his exaggeration his controversy becomes a strangely glaring picture of his mind; nor was it merely in controversy that his boundless exaggeration shows itself.

[1] P. 28. Cp. Lauterbach, "Tagebuch" (Khummer), p. 141; Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 118.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 346 f. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 90 and 427.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 317 ff.; Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 46 f., in the "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," 1530.

Sometimes, apparently, without his being aware of it, but likewise even in the course of his literary labours and his preaching, things had a tendency to assume gigantic proportions and fantastic shapes in his eyes. Among his friends the aberrations into which his fondness for vigorous and far-fetched language led him were well known. It was certain of his own followers who dubbed him "*Doctor Hyperbolicus*" and declared that "he made a camel of a flea, and said a thousand when he meant less than five." This is related by the Lutheran zealot, Cyriacus Spangenberg, who dutifully seeks to refute the "many, who, though disciples of his," were in the habit of making such complaints.[1]

His "rhetoric," in spite of a literary style in many respects excellent, occasionally becomes grotesque and insipid owing to the utter want of taste he shows in his choice of expressions. This was particularly the case in his old age, when he no longer had at his command the figures of speech in which to clothe decently those all too vigorous words to which, as the years went by, he became more and more addicted. In the last year of his life, for instance, writing to his Elector and the Hessian Landgrave concerning the "Defensive league" of those who stood up for "the old religion," he says: God Himself has intervened to oppose this league, not being unaware of its aims; "God and all His angels must indeed have had a terrible cold in the head not to have been able to smell, even until this 21st day of October, the savoury dish that goes by the name of Defensive league; but then He took some sneezewort and cleared His brain and gave them to understand pretty plainly that His catarrh was gone and that He now knew very well what Defensive league was."[2] Luther does not seem to feel how much out of place such buffoonery was in a theologian, let alone in the founder of a new religion. Even in some of his earlier writings and in those which he prized the most, e.g. in the Commentary on Galatians, a similar want of taste is noticeable. It is also unnecessary to repeat that even his "best" writings, among them the work on Galatians, are frequently rendered highly

[1] Spangenberg, "Theander Lutherus, Von des werthen Gottes Mannes Doctor Martin Luther 21 Predigten" (preached after 1562), Ursel, s. a. Bl. 12′.

[2] Letter written after Oct. 24, 1545, "Briefe," 6, p. 392.

unpalatable by an excess of useless repetitions. Everybody can see that the monotony of Luther's works is chiefly due to the haste and carelessness with which they were written and then rushed through the press.

In considering Luther's "rhetoric," however, our attention perforce wanders from the form to the matter, for Luther based his claim to originality on his art of bringing forward striking and effective thoughts and thus charming and captivating the reader. In his thoughts the same glaring, grotesque and contradictory element is apparent as in his literary style and outward conduct. Much is mere impressionism, useful indeed for his present purposes, but contradicted or modified by statements elsewhere. Whatever comes to his pen must needs be put on paper and worked for all it is worth. Thus in many instances his thoughts stray into the region of paradox. Thereby he seemed indeed to be rendering easier the task of opponents who wished to refute him, but as a matter of fact he only increased the difficulty of dealing with him owing to his elusiveness.

Even down to the present day the incautious reader or historian is all too frequently exposed to the temptation of taking Luther at his word in passages where in point of fact his thoughts are the plaything of his "rhetoric." Anybody seeking to portray Luther's train of thought is liable to be confronted with passages, whether from the same writing or from another composed under different influences, where statements to an entirely different effect occur. Hence, when attempting to describe his views, it is essential to lay stress only on statements that are clear, devoid of any hyperbolical vesture and frequently reiterated.

He was not, of course, serious and meant to introduce no new rule for the interpretation of Scripture when he pronounced the words so often brought up against him ("*sic volo, sic iubeo*") in connection with his interpolation of the term "alone" in Rom. iii. 28;[1] yet this sentence occupies such a position in a famous passage of his works that it will repay us to give it with its context as a typical instance:

"If your Papist insists on making much needless ado about the word 'alone,' tell him smartly: Dr. Martin Luther will have it so and says: Papist and donkey is one and the same.

[1] "For we account a man to be justified by faith *alone* without the works of the law." Cp. vol. v., xxxiv. 3.

'*Sic volo, sic iubeo; sit pro ratione voluntas.*' For we will not be the Papists' pupils or disciples, but their masters and judges, and, for once in a way, we shall strut, and rap these asses' heads; and as Paul boasted to his crazy saints, so I too will boast to these my donkeys. They are Doctors? So am I. They are learned? So am I. They are preachers? So am I. They are theologians? So am I. They are disputants? So am I. They are philosophers? So am I. They are dialecticians? So am I. They are lecturers? So am I. They write books? So do I. And I will boast still further: I can expound the Psalms and the Prophets; this they can't do. I can interpret; they, they can't."

He proceeds in the same vein and finally concludes: "And if there is one amongst them who rightly understands a single preface or chapter of Aristotle, then I will allow myself to be tossed. Here I am not too generous with my words."—And yet there is still more to follow that does not belong to the subject! Having had his say he begins again: "Give no further answer to these donkeys when they idly bray about the word '*sola*,' but merely tell them: 'Luther will have it so and says he is a Doctor above all the Doctors of the Papacy.' There it shall remain; in future I will despise them utterly and have them despised, so long as they continue to be such people, I mean, donkeys. For there are unblushing scoundrels amongst them who have never even learnt their own, viz. the sophists', art, for instance, Dr. Schmidt, Dr. Dirty Spoon [Cochlæus] and their ilk. And yet they dare to stand in my way."

He nevertheless seeks to give a more satisfactory answer, and admits, "that the word 'alone' is not found in either Latin or Greek text, . . . at the letters of which our donkeys stare like cows at a new gate. They don't see that the meaning of the text requires it."[1]—The last assertion may be taken for what it is worth. The principal thing, however, is that he introduced the interpolation with a meaning of his own, though he could not have held that his doctrine of a dead faith (for this was what his "faith alone" amounted to) really tallied with the Apostle's teaching. On this point he is quite silent in his strange answers. He is far more concerned in parrying the blows with his rhetorical artifice. His appeal to the will of Dr. Martin Luther may be termed the feint of a skilful swordsman; his whole treatment of the matter is designed to surprise, to puzzle and amuse, and, as a matter of fact, could impress only the populace. It is not without reason that Adolf Harnack speaks of the "strange logic of his arguments, the faults of his exegesis and the injustice and barbarity of his polemics."[2]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 635 f.; Erl. ed., 65, p. 107 (cp. "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 249), in the "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzschen," which is in fact no "letter" but a polemical treatise in the form of a letter, published by Wenceslaus Link in September, 1530, at Luther's instance.

[2] "Dogmengesch.," 3^4, p. 817.

The strange controversial methods of his rhetoric give, however, a true picture of his soul.

All this inconstancy and self-contradiction, this restless upheaval of assertions, now rendered doubtful by their palpable exaggeration, now uncertain owing to the admixture of humour they contain, now questionable because already rejected elsewhere by their author, all this mirrors the unrest of his soul, the zigzag course of his thought, in short a mind unenlightened by the truth, which thrives only amidst the excitement of conflict and contradiction. Moderation in resolve and deed is as little to his taste as any consistent submission of his word to the yoke of reflection and truthfulness. He abandons his actions as well as his most powerful organ, his voice, to the impulse and the aims of the moment. He finds no difficulty, for instance, even in his early days, in soundly rating his fellow-monks even in the most insulting and haughty manner, and in assuring them in the same breath of his "peaceable heart" and his "perfect calm," or in shifting the responsibility for his earlier outbursts of anger on God, Who so willed it and Whose action cannot be withstood. All this we find in his letter in 1514 to the Erfurt Augustinians, where his singular disposition already reveals itself.[1] No less easy was it to him at the commencement of his struggle to protest most extravagant humility towards both Pope and Emperor, to liken himself to a "flea," and yet to promise resistance to the uttermost. He was guilty of exaggeration in his championship of the downtrodden peasants before the war, and, when it was over, was again extravagant in his demand for their punishment. With an all too lavish hand he abandons Holy Scripture to each one's private interpretation, even to the "miller's maid," and yet, as soon as anyone, without the support of "miracles," attempted to bring forward some new doctrine differing from his own, he withdrew it with the utmost imperiousness as a treasure reserved.

As in style, so in deed, he was a chameleon. This he was in his inmost feelings, and not less in his theology.[2]

In one matter only did he remain always the same, on

[1] Letter of Jan. 16, 1514, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 17 f.

[2] On his theology cp. the numerous instances given in Denifle, e.g., 1^2, pp. 467, 469, 657. P. 466: "He is always playing with grotesque ideas." Cp. also, *ibid.*, p. 454 f.

one point only is his language always consistent and clear, viz. in his hatred and defiance of the Church of Rome. Some have praised his straightforwardness, and it must be admitted, that, in this particular, he certainly always shows his true character with entire unrestraint. This hate permeates all his thoughts, his prayer, all his exalted reflections, his good wishes for others, his sighs at the approach of death. Even in his serious illness in 1527 he was, at least according to the account of his friend Jonas, principally concerned that God should not magnify his enemies, the Papists, but exalt His name "against the enemies of His most holy Word"; he recalls to mind that John the Evangelist, too, "had written a good, strong book against the Pope" (the Apocalypse); as John did not die a martyr, he also would be content without martyrdom. Above all, he was not in the least contrite for what he had printed against the doctrines of the Pope, "even though some thought he had been too outspoken and bitter."[1] In his second dangerous illness, in 1537, Luther declared even more emphatically, that he had "done right" in "storming the Papacy," and that if he could live longer he would undertake still "worse things against that beast."[2]

Luther's overestimation of himself was partly due to the seductive effect of the exaggerated praise and admiration of his friends, amongst whom Jonas must also be reckoned. They, like Jonas, could see in him nothing but the "inspiration of the Holy Ghost."[3] Luther's responsibility must appear less to those who lay due stress on the surroundings amidst which he lived. He was good-natured enough to give credence to such eulogies. Just as, moved by sympathy, he was prone to lavish alms on the undeserving, so he was too apt to be influenced by the exaggerations of his admirers and the applause of the masses, though, occasionally, he did not fail to protest.

This veneration went so far that many, in spite of his remonstrances, placed him not only on a level with but even above the Apostles.[4] His devoted pupils usually called him Elias. He himself was not averse to the thought that he had something

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 162.
[2] "Briefe," 6, p. 185 f., in the so-called "first Will."
[3] Jonas, in his panegyric on Luther.
[4] Cp. e.g. Mathesius, "Tischreden," pp. 83 and 126.

in common with the fiery prophet. As early as 1522 Wolfgang Rychard, his zealous assistant at Ulm, greets him in his letters as the risen Elias, and actually dates a new era from his coming. In this the physician Magenbuch imitated him, and the title was as well received by Melanchthon and the other Wittenbergers as it was by outsiders.[1] In the Preface which Luther wrote in 1530 to a work by the theologian Johann Brenz, he contrasts the comparative calmness of the preacher to his own ways, and remarks that his own uncouth style vomited forth a chaos and torrent of words, and was stormy and fierce, because he was ever battling with countless hordes of monsters; he had received as his share of the fourfold spirit of Elias (4 Kings xix.), the "whirlwind and the fire" which "overthrew mountains and uprooted rocks"; the Heavenly Father had bestowed this upon him to use against the thick heads, and had made him a "strong wedge wherewith to split asunder hard blocks."[2]

When, in 1532, his great victory over the Sacramentarians was discussed in the circle of his friends, the words of the Magdeburg Chancellor, Laurentius Zoch, recurred to him: "After reading my books against the Sacramentarians he said of me: 'Now I see that this man is enlightened by the Holy Ghost; such a thing as this no Papist could ever have achieved,'" and so, Luther adds in corroboration," he was won over to the Evangel; what I say is, that all the Papists together, with all their strength, would not have been able to refute the Sacramentarians, either by authority [the Fathers] or from Scripture. Yet I get no thanks!"[3]

Not his admirers only, but even his literary opponents contributed, at least indirectly, to inflate his rhetoric and his assurance; his sense of his own superiority grew in the measure that he saw his foes lagging far behind him both in language and in vigour.

Amongst the Catholic theologians of Germany there were too few able to compete with him in point of literary dexterity. Luther stood on a pinnacle and carried away the multitude by the war-cry he hurled over the heads of the Catholic polemists and apologists who bore witness to the ancient truths, some well and creditably, others more humbly and awkwardly. The apparent disadvantage under which the Catholic writers laboured, was, that they were not so relentless in treading under foot considerations of charity and decency; unlike him, they could not address fiery appeals to the passions in order to enlist them as their

[1] For proofs see Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 4, p. 89, n. 3. Cp. vol. ii., p. 162 f., vol. iii., p. 322, and above, p. 269.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 650; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 512.

[3] Schlaginhaufen, "Anfzeichnungen," p. 31.

allies, though traces far too many of the violence of the conflict are found even in their polemics. Amongst them were men of high culture and refinement, who stood far above the turmoils of the day and knew how to estimate them at their true worth. They felt themselves supported by the Catholics throughout the world, whose most sacred possessions were being so unjustly attacked.

CHAPTER XXVII

VOICES FROM THE CAMP OF THE DEFENDERS OF THE CHURCH

1. Luther's "demoniacal" storming. A man "possessed"

We have plenty descriptions of Luther from the pen of literary opponents, and they have a perfect right to be taken into account, for they are so many voices courageously raised in defence of the heirloom of the faith. What has led to this being so often passed over is the fear lest their censure should be taken as prejudice, and, needless to say, what they tell us must be carefully weighed. Much depends on the circumstances in which they wrote, on the character of the writers, on the content of their statements and on how far they differ from or agree with other witnesses and the known facts. Several striking passages from their writings, in so far as they are confirmed either by Luther himself or by his followers, have already been utilised in the present work and have served to complete our picture of Luther's mind.

Catholic polemists all agree on one point, viz. that the bitter and unkindly ways of their adversary were a clear proof that he had no Divine call. Like Erasmus, they too contend that no man who excited such great commotion and was so insatiable in abuse and vituperation could be honestly furthering God's cause. Like Erasmus, they too question whether such unheard-of presumption could "be combined with an apostolic spirit or did not rather denote madness." They compare his inconstancy, his passion and his fickleness to a "restless, stormy sea." His slanderous tongue, which so unsparingly lashed the olden Church and its doctrines, reminds them of the "roaring lion," who, according to St. Peter, "goeth about seeking whom he may devour," or of the "fiery darts" of the wicked one against whom St. Paul utters a warning. With pain and horror they call to mind the seven-headed beast of the Apocalypse,

that rises out of the deep, bearing names of blasphemy and with a "mouth that speaks great things and profanities."

Their strictures cannot be examined in detail here, but we may instance a trait which is common to many of these writers and which, though kept in the background as not altogether relevant to the discussion, yet deserves consideration as a proof of the effect that Luther's unbounded hate, his abuse and his arrogance had on the feelings and judgment of contemporaries. Their keen sense of religion made them ascribe his behaviour to the devil, and to assume, or at least to suspect, that he was in some way possessed. It is curious to note how many unhesitatingly have recourse to this explanation.

"We must regard it as a sure sign of demoniacal possession," wrote Johann Hoffmeister, Prior of the Colmar Augustinians, "that Luther should thus persistently enjoin on preachers as a duty to go on cursing and denouncing from the pulpit, though he himself sees and bewails the fact, that contempt for religion, godlessness and every vice is steadily gaining ground in Germany. What can we expect unfortunate youths to learn from such abuse and reviling in the churches?"[1]

"Luther is the devil's own bellows," wrote Paul Bachmann, Abbot of Altzelle, in 1534, "with which the devil blows up a whirlwind of error, scandal and heresy."[2] He goes even further and appeals to what he had heard from Luther's brother monks concerning the scene in choir, when, falling into a fit, Luther had frantically protested that he was not the man possessed (vol. i., p. 17).[3]

Bachmann adds: "Luther is the cruel monster that John the

[1] "Dicta memorabilia," Coloniæ, 1543, p. 13′. Cp. N. Paulus, "Hoffmeister," p. 53, n. 4.

[2] "Lobgesang auff des Luthers Winckelmesse," Leipzig, 1534, Bl. D 2′. The author says, that Luther himself admits in his "Von der Winckelmesse" that he had received his ideas on the Mass "through the disputation and revelation of the devil" (Bl. A 2).

[3] "Czu Errettung den schwachen Ordenspersonen . . . eyn trostlich Rede," Dresden, 1534, Bl. C 3′: "His brother monks who were with him in the Convent at Erfurt, say, that once, when the Gospel 'Jesus was casting out a devil and it was dumb' was being read, Luther fell down and lay for some time screaming, 'I am not dumb, I am not dumb.'" Bachmann also mentions the same incident in "Ein Maulstreich dem Lutherischen . . . Rachen, das Closterleben zu lestern" (Dresden, 1534), Bl. B 2. Cp. O. Clemen, "Paul Bachmann" ("N. Archiv f. sächs. Gesch.," 26, 1905, p. 30). In "Ein Maulstreich" he also says: "What sort of an attack would that be, Luther, were I to write or relate what some say, viz. that the devil Incubus was your father! I will, however, refrain from doing so and not bring this charge against you." (Bl. B 1′). He thinks he has stronger evidence for Luther's possession than for this legend.

Apostle saw rising out of the deep, with open jaws to utter abuse and blasphemy." "This is no mere mistaken man, but the wicked devil himself to whom no lying, deceit or falsehood is too much."[1]

Even from men who had long sided with Luther we hear similar things; for instance, Willibald Pirkheimer of Nüremberg says bluntly: "Luther, with his impudent and defiant tongue, betrays plainly enough what is in his heart; he seems to have gone quite mad, or to be agitated by some wicked demon."[2]

Erasmus declared that people, rather than credit his calumnies, would say that he was steeped in vengefulness, mentally deranged, or possessed by some sinister spirit.[3]

[1] Cp. above, p. 101.

[2] Letter of 1529 to Prior Kilian Leib of Rebdorf, in Döllinger, "Reformation," 1, p. 533, and J. Schlecht, "Leibs Briefwechsel," p. 12, from Leib, "Verantwortung des Klosterstandes," Bl. 170′: "*vel a malo dæmonio agitari.*"

[3] In his "Purgatio adv. epistolam non sobriam Lutheri," 1534, "Opp.," 10, col. 1557: "*a sinistro quopiam agitari genio*" (for the whole passage see vol. iii., p. 136, n. 2). It is worth while to select from this reply of Erasmus, and from his "*Hyperaspistes*" against Luther, some passages in which he expresses doubts as to Luther's mental equilibrium, or as to his sobriety. In his "Purgatio" (*c.* 1548) Erasmus says of certain propositions of Luther's: "*Num hæc tam delira videntur esse mentis sobriæ?*" And before this: "*Sed longe perniciosior est philautiæ et odii temulentia quam vini*" (*c.* 1546). "*Demiror, si Martinus febri caruit, quum hæc deliramenta inauspicatis illineret chartis*" (*c.* 1545). "*Ipsa febris non posset loqui febrilius*" (*c.* 1546). "*Arbitror, Orestem olim dixisse saniora, etiam extra lucida intervalla*" (*c.* 1547). "*Hic nihil crepat nisi Satanas, Diabolos, Larvas, Lamias, Megæras, aliasque voces plus quam tragicas. Fortassis ex abundantia cordis os loquitur; certe hæc esse solent venturæ insaniæ præsagia*" (*c.* 1542). "*Quæ cum scribit, videtur sibi mire δεινός; verum hæc δείνωσις sobriis videtur esse mera insania*" (*c.* 1543). Martin may wish to make him out an unbeliever, but his readers were more likely to look upon him himself as mad ("*citius lymphatum,*" etc., *c.* 1557, first passage given above).—In the first book of his "*Hyperaspistes*" (*ib.*) he writes: "*Hæc enim tam stulta aut alius addidit tuo libro, aut non eras sobrius, quum scriberes*" (*c.* 1281). "*Totus enim hic sensus sapit culinam, in qua non sobrius videtur hæc scripsisse*" (*c.* 1367). "*Si qui hæc scribit, sobrius est, ego nunquam vidi temulentem*" (*c.* 1371). "*Quis non videt hæc sine mente scribi, nec agere Lutherum, quum hæc scribit, sed agi spiritu quodam maledicentiæ*" (*c.* 1394). "*An hic Lutherus videtur fuisse sobrius?*" (*c.* 1411; in connection with Luther's assertion that God had wrought the evil in Pharaoh). "*Non est sobrius, ut paucis dicam, non vino fortassis aut cerevisia, sed philautia et dulcedine quadam maledicendi, qua nunquam satiatur, quantumvis sese ingurgitaverit*" (*c.* 1477). "*Quam multa hic delirat Lutherus, sine mente fundens verba*" (*c.* 1472).—Luther's contemporary, Caspar Schatzgeyer, a Fransiscan of kindly ways, speaks like Erasmus and describes Luther's "De votis monasticis" as the work either of a drunken man or of one possessed ("*Replica,*" s. l. et. a., Augsb., 1522, f. E 1), the Paris theologian, Jodocus Clichtovæus ("Antilutherus," Paris., 1524, f. 124′), speaks of it in the same way.—All these statements, with those already given, are worth the consideration of pathologists; though emanating from opponents, their number gives them importance.

Even Luther's brother monk at Erfurt, Johann Nathin, who had been struck with wonder at the young monk's sudden conversion, remarked later, when the two had gone different ways, that "a spirit of apostasy had entered him," which was corrupting all the clergy.[1]

Johann Cochlæus thinks that Luther's unholy doctrine resembles a dragon with seven heads; such a monster hailed, not from God, but from the devil.[2] He allows himself to be carried so far away by his conviction that Luther was possessed, as to scorn all caution and to take literally a certain rhetorical statement of Luther's, where he tells us that he had eaten more than a bushel of salt with the devil, and that he had held a disputation with him on the Mass.[3] Cochlæus here lays great stress on the views and reports of Luther's former associates in the monastery.[4]

Under the impression made on him by the vehemence of Luther's language and his whole conduct, Hieronymus Emser declared subsequently to Luther's so-called "great Reformation Writings": "This monk who has gone astray differs from the devil only in that he carries out what the wicked one inspires him with."[5] Emser, too, appeals to Luther's former associates in the monastery: Luther "was possessed by the evil spirit from his youth upwards," he says, "as is well known in his monastery at Erfurt, where he made his profession."[6]

Kilian Leib, a contemporary defender of the Church in the Eichstätt district, tells in his Annals of the impression made upon those present by Luther's behaviour at the Diet of Worms: He displayed such pride in his manner and conduct that we seemed to have before us the image of the enemy of mankind. The latter must have dwelt within him and instructed him, if indeed he does not still do so.[7] He quotes with approval Emser's first statement, and, from Cochlæus, the passage where Luther speaks of his eating salt with the devil.[8]

[1] Dungersheim, "Erzeigung," p. 15. His authority is a statement twice made by Nathin, first (see above, p. 352, n. 3), that Luther as a young monk fell into a fit in choir during the reading of the Gospel on the man possessed, "and had raved like one possessed," and then a later more detailed explanation of the same incident.

[2] "Septiceps Lutherus ubique sibi suis scriptis contrarius," Dresdæ, 1529 (dedication).

[3] "Commentaria de actis et scriptis M. Lutheri" (ed. Mogunt., 1549), p. 1.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] "Auff des Stieres tzu Wiettenberg wiettende Replica," end. In Enders, "Luther und Emser," 2, p. 25 f.

[6] "Auss was Grund und Ursach Luthers Dolmetschung . . . verbotten worden sey," 1523. In "Zu Luthers Vorred zum Römerbrief," Bl. 65′.

[7] "Historia sui temporis," ed. Aretin ("Beitr. zur Gesch. und Lit.," 7, Munich, 1806, p. 535 ff.), p. 666: "*Quam elata cervice tumidisque moribus expresserit prodideritque superbiam, ut sathanæ veteris vel etiam præsentanei hospitis illius et præceptoris quædam in eo imago spectaretur.*"

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 663.

Hieronymus Dungersheim, the opponent to whom we owe Nathin's remark, given above, upbraids Luther, the "child of Belial," for his "devilish writings" "whereby he, and Satan through him, blasphemes Christ."[1]

Aleander the Nuncio reported on April 17, 1521, from the Diet of Worms, that some regarded Luther as mad, others as "possessed"; he also mentions on the testimony of others how Luther, on his arrival, "had gazed about him with the eyes of a demon."[2]

The Reichstagsabschied of Worms speaks of Luther as "led by the evil spirit," nay, "as the wicked enemy himself clad in human form."[3]

In the tract against a pamphlet of Luther's published by Duke George of Saxony, in 1531 under Franz Arnoldi's name, we read at the very commencement, that Luther was losing many of his adherents because he showed his hand "so clearly and plainly in his writings, that, as they said, Luther must certainly be possessed of the devil, indeed of the whole legion that Christ drove out of the man possessed and into the herd of swine who forthwith went raving mad and ran headlong into the sea": "By the fruits [of his words] we may recognise the spirit."[4]

Johann Dietenberger, as early as 1524, in his "Against the unchristian book of Martin Luther on the abuse of the Mass," says: "There is no doubt whatever that the horrid, damnable Lutheran doctrine has been brought into the world by the devil, otherwise it would not be so utterly beastly and contentious, quarrelsome and fickle, and so fitted for everything evil." "These are all manifest lies, nothing but abuse, slander and blasphemy, devilish lies and works by which Luther the arch-liar has driven the world to the devil." He calls Luther "the devil's hired messenger" and says of his manner of writing: "Here everything reeks of devils; nothing that the devilish man writes can stand without the devil who endevils all his products."[5]

The Ratisbon Benedictine, Christopher Hoffmann († 1534), in his sermons to the Chapter preached before 1525 represents Luther as an apostate and as "*dæmone plenus.*"[6]

The anonymous "*Iudicium de Luthero*" included in a German codex at Munich and dating from the early years of the controversy, also deserves to be mentioned. The author indeed praises Luther's learning all too generously, but then goes on to

[1] "Dadelung," p. 14.

[2] Brieger, "Aleander und Luther," pp. 147, 143. Kalkoff, "Die Depeschen Aleanders vom Wormser Reichstage"[2], 1897, p. 171.

[3] "Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Karl V," 1, p. 718 ff.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 25[2], p. 129 f.

[5] Quoted by W. Walther, "Für Luther," p. 213. *Ibid.*, 214, from Dietenberger's work against Luther's doctrine of auricular Confession: To speak and teach as Luther did was to have "a compact and alliance with the poison of the devil and with eternal death." *Ibid.*, similar statements from Emser and others.

[6] O. Kronseder, "Christophorus Hoffmann," 1898, p. 57, with reference to Cod. Monac. lat. 14626, p. 326.

say, that he looked on him as "no Christian," and to speak of the "devil's brood" by whom Martin Luther is possessed.[1]

Berthold of Chiemsee in his "Tewtsche Theologey" considers that in his day false teaching has been spread abroad "by a horrid devil," who makes use of wicked men; the "devil, with his wicked company, has stirred up heresy."[2]

Petrus Sylvius, in 1534, after a lengthy discourse on Luther's "seductive and damnable" manner of "slandering and blaspheming," says, that he was "in very truth a possessed and devilish man."[3]

In order the better to explain how these and many other of Luther's contemporaries came to see a diabolical influence in his work, we may quote a few words from Johann Adam Möhler's lectures on Church History (published posthumously): "We find Luther in 1520 and 1521 displaying a feverish literary activity that arouses in the reader a horrible misgiving. An uneasy sense of discomfort oppresses us, and a secret shudder runs through our frame when we think of the boundless selfishness and presumption which holds sway in this man; we seem to be standing within the inner circle where that sinister power rules, which, from the beginning of the world, has ever been seeking to taint the history of our race."[4]

Luther himself, as early as 1518, alludes to opponents of his who descried in him the influence of the devil. In a letter to Trutfetter, his old master, he says: "They speak of me from the pulpit as a heretic, a madman, a tempter and one possessed by I know not how many devils"; but "let people say, hearken to and believe what, where and as much as they will, I shall do what God inspires me to do."[5]

Paolo Vergerio, the Nuncio, whose detailed account of his interview with Luther has already been related (vol. iii., p. 426 ff.), speaks, like Aleander, of his "strange look," which, the longer he observed it, the more it reminded him of persons he had formerly seen whom some regarded as possessed; his eyes were restless and uncanny, and bore the stamp of rage and anger. "Whether he be possessed or not," he says, "in his behaviour he is the personification of presumption, wickedness and indiscretion."[6]

[1] Cod. Monac. germ., 4842, Bl. 2. Cp. above, p. 242.

[2] Ed. Reithmeier, p. 2, 165.

[3] N. Paulus, "Die deutschen Dominikaner," p. 63.—What the Catholics thought will be better understood when we remember that even H. Bullinger, in his "History of the Reformation" (ed. Hottinger and Vœgeli, 2, Frauenfeld, 1838, p. 239), says of Luther's "Kurtz Bekentnis" of 1544: "Although he had previously written much that was illogical, insulting and even blasphemous, yet he outdoes himself in the shameful, wanton and offensive words he uses in this booklet. He bursts for very devils . . . and acts *like a man possessed.*"

[4] "KG.," ed. Gams, 3, 1868, p. 105 f.

[5] Letter of May 9, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 188.

[6] Ed. Friedensburg ("Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland," 1533–1559, vol. i.), p. 541, report on Nov. 13, 1535.

The statements regarding Luther's eyes made by various persons who knew him would appear to have furnished many with a ground for thinking him under some diabolical spell. "Luther's dark and sparkling eyes, deep-set and keen . . . must indeed have made an even greater impression than the best of Cranach's portraits."[1]

While his friends, Melanchthon for instance, saw in them the expression of a high-minded and noble nature and a "leonine glance,"[2] many Catholics, like Vergerio, saw the reflection of a spirit hostile to God. At Worms, as already related, Aleander had said, though only on the strength of hearsay, that Luther had "the eyes of a demon," and a Spanish account from Worms also remarks: "his eyes forebode no good."[3] Cardinal Cajetan, in his examination of Luther at Augsburg, stated, that he would confer no more with him; "he has deep-set eyes and strange fancies in his head."[4] The University Professor, Martin Pollich, of Melrichstatt (Mellerstadt), seems to have let fall a similar remark during Luther's early years at Wittenberg; he too mentioned his "deep-set eyes" and "strange fancies." It may be, however, that Luther, who tells us this, erroneously puts into Pollich's mouth the remark actually made by Cajetan.[5] It was Pollich also who often declared, that this monk would one day overthrow the system of teaching which had hitherto prevailed in all the Universities.[6] Johannes Dantiscus, a Pole, who visited Luther during a journey through Germany and who subsequently became Bishop of Culm and Ermeland, expresses himself very frankly. He says: His eyes were keen and sparkled strangely, as is sometimes the case with those possessed.[7] Luther's own pupil, Johann Kessler, also found something

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 518.

[2] "Melanchthoniana," ed. O. Waltz ("Zeitschr. f. KG.," 4, 1880, p. 324 ff.; see also above, vol. i., p. 279, n. 2. According to Erasmus Alber, a personal acquaintance, friend and admirer of Luther's, the latter had a "fine, open and brave countenance and hawk's eyes." Cp. Alber, "Wider die verfluchte Lehre der Carlstadter," Bl. f. 3 ff.; see Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 518.

[3] "Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Karl V," 2, p. 632: "en los ojos no ben señalado."

[4] According to Myconius, "Historia Reformationis," p. 30 *sq.* (written after 1541). Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 97: "*Cardinalis Augustæ dixit de me: iste frater habet profundos oculos, ideo et mirabiles phantasias in capite habet.*"

[5] Pollich's remark ("Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 154, from Rebenstock) has been characterised quite wrongly by O. Waltz ("Zeitschr. f. KG.," 2, 1878, p. 627) as spurious and a late interpollation. As a matter of fact it had merely been excluded from the Table-Talk by Aurifaber; see Seidemann in "Zeitschr. f. KG.," 3, 1879, p. 305. Cp. vol. i., p. 86, n. 5.

[6] Above, vol. i., p. 86.

[7] Letter of Aug. 8, 1523, in Hipler, "Nikolaus Kopernikus und Luther," 1868, p. 73. Höfler, "Adrian VI," p. 320, n. 2, quotes a remark of Dantiscus on Luther: "*affirmans eum esse dæmoniacum.*" Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," 2^{18}, p. 194, n. 3.

uncomfortable about his glance: He had "jet-black brows and eyes that sparkled and twinkled like stars, so that it was no easy thing to fix them."[1]

In the above statement concerning Luther's look and the likelihood of his being possessed, Vergerio also has a passing allusion to a certain crude tale then current which quite befitted the taste of the age and which he gives for what it may be worth in his official report, viz. that Luther was begotten of the devil.[2] This tale also found its way into several Catholic works written in that credulous and deeply agitated period.

It was not the first time such things had been invented concerning a person who was an object of ill-will in that age when prejudice told so strongly.

Luther himself was in the habit of speaking of the actual occurrence of diabolical births and of the "*diabolus incubus*";[3] he not only did not rise above the vulgar beliefs handed down by a credulous past, but even imparted to them, at least so far as the power of the devil went, a still worse shape. He never tired of filling the imagination of the reader with diabolical images (vol. v., xxxi., 4); and he spoke of persons possessed as though the world were replete with them.

If we could trust Cochlæus, Luther's brother monks would seem to have partly been responsible for the report not merely of a diabolical possession ("*obsessio*, *circumsessio*"), but also of a certain wilful league with the devil entered into by the young Augustinian. They could not forget the "singularity" of the young monk, particularly that once, during his fit in choir whilst the Gospel of the man possessed was being read, he had cried out,

[1] "Sabbata," St. Gallen, 1902, p. 65.

[2] He refers simply to what he knew from some of Luther's intimate friends "concerning his birth and past life up to the time of his becoming a monk."

[3] In his Exposition of the Ten Commandments, published in 1518 and frequently reprinted during his lifetime, "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 407; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, p. 18: "Among the devils there are '*incubi*' and '*succubi*,' of which I shall speak more fully immediately," which he then proceeds to do. The children are, according to him, abortions. According to a statement in the Table-Talk, however, they were "devils with bodies like the mother's," or stolen children, or changelings, like one he wished to have drowned because the devil constituted the soul in its body ("Werke," Erl. ed., 60, pp. 37–42). In his exposition of Genesis (cap. vi.) Luther admits the existence and activity of the said "*incubi*." He declares he had heard from many persons credible instances and had himself met with such (!), and even appeals to St. Augustine ("*Hoc negare impudentiæ videtur*," "*De civ. Dei*," 15, c. 23); he remarks, however, that it was altogether false to believe that "anything could be born of a union of devil and man"; on the contrary, those taken for the devil's offspring, some of whom he had seen, had either been distorted by the devil though not actually begotten by him, or were real devils who had either assumed flesh in appearance or borrowed it elsewhere with the devil's help. "Opp. lat. exeg.," 2, p. 127. Cp. N. Paulus, "Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess vornehmlich im 16. Jahrh.," Freiburg, 1910, p. 35 f.

"I am not he." Cochlæus, who had some intercourse with the Augustinians at Nuremberg, hints in his Commentaries at the "secret intercourse with the demon" of which Luther was suspected, and immediately afterwards refers, though under a misapprehension, to Luther's own remark about eating salt with the devil, and holding a disputation with him.[1] The passage frequently attributed to Cochlæus, viz. that it was notorious "the devil Incubus was Luther's father," and son of the devil his "real name, therefore remain the devil's son as long as you live,"[2] was, however, never penned by him. But he was aware of the reports on this subject already in circulation and never saw fit to treat them with the contempt they deserved.

All the passages quoted above regarding Luther's being possessed of the devil are in every instance quite independent of this stupid tale: they are based throughout on the character of Luther's writings and on his public behaviour.

The first to relate anything concerning Luther's diabolical parentage was, according to N. Paulus, Petrus Sylvius in his polemics of 1531–1534.[3] He recounts with perfect seriousness the information which he says he had from an "honest, god-fearing woman," who had heard it from some former female friends of Luther's mother to whom the latter had herself disclosed the fact: "At night time, when the doors were locked, a beautiful youth dressed in red had frequently visited her before the Carnival," etc. Some such idle tale may have reached the ears of the Legate Vergerio during his travels through Germany in that same decade. Possibly he may have expressed himself in private with greater credulity concerning this story than in his official report, for Contarini goes so far as to write that Vergerio "had found that Martin was begotten of the devil."[4]

The silly story ought to have made all Luther's later critics more cautious, even with regard to the statements regarding Luther's obsession by the Evil One. The few Catholic writers, who have ventured even in our own day to assert that Luther was possessed, should have been deterred from entering a region so obscure and where the danger of missing one's way is so great. Even in the case of persons still living it is rash and often morally impossible to diagnose a case of possession; much more is this the case when the person in question has so long been dead.

[1] "Commentaria," p. 2: "*sive ex occulto aliquo cum dæmone commercio.*"

[2] The writing in question, "Ein Maulstreich," etc., is not by Cochlæus but by Paul Bachmann. See above, p. 352, n. 3.

[3] Paulus (p. 356, n. 3), p. 63 f., from Sylvius, "Zwei neugedruckte Büchlein," 1533, p. 3′, and "Die letzten zwei Büchlein," 1534. Cp. also his work of 1531, "Ein besonder nützliches. . . . Büchlein."

[4] Friedensburg (above, p. 356, n. 6), p. 554.

2. Voices of Converts

Of the Catholic writers, those in particular were sure of a hearing amongst the educated, who for a long while and until it revealed itself in its true colours, had been inclined to Lutheranism. Such was, for instance, the case with several of the pupils and admirers of Erasmus. Among these were Ulrich Zasius and Silvius Egranus, who, though ready to criticise Luther severely, were not wanting in words of praise. The latter was a good type of the half-fledged convert.

Silvius Egranus (see vol. iii., p. 402), for instance, wrote: "I do not deny that Luther has spirit and inventive genius, but I find him utterly wanting in judgment, learning and prudence. . . . Luther's foolhardy abuse, his defiance and violence, breed nothing but unutterable confusion. Nowhere do I see Christian godliness flourishing in the hearts of men, nay, owing to Luther, it is not safe even to speak of the Gospel of Christ or of Paul."[1] "I declare that Luther's doctrine is a web of sophisms, is neither ecclesiastical nor Apostolic, but closely related to that sophistical buffoonery and strong language to which he is ever having recourse."[2] —Ulrich Zasius, a Humanist, and at the same time learned in the law, after changing his views, publicly took the field against Luther even in official academical discourses; he maintained nevertheless that he had been led by Luther to a deeper knowledge of the spirit of Christ; his skill and talent he never even questioned; he declared: "There is something in Luther's spirit that meets with my approval."[3] What alienated him from Luther was not only his attack on the authority of the Pope—with the grounds of which Zasius was well acquainted from his study of Canon Law—but his denial of the merit of good works. This contention seemed to him diametrically opposed to Holy Scripture. "You reject [meritorious] good works," he says to Luther's followers, "and yet I know One Who says: Their works shall follow them."[4] He finds it necessary to reprove Luther

[1] Letter to Bartholomew Golsibius, in Weller, "Altes aus allen Theilen der Gesch.," 1, p. 178. Döllinger, "Reformation," 1, p. 133.

[2] Letter to Nicholas Œcander; Weller, *ibid.*, 2, p. 780 f.; Döllinger, *ibid.*, 135.

[3] "Epistolæ," ed. Riegger, Ulmæ, 1774, p. 72. Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 178.

[4] R. Stintzing, "Ulrich Zasius," Basle, 1857, p. 230, from the letter of Zasius to Thomas Blaurer, Dec. 21, 1521. "Briefwechsel der Brüder Blaurer," 1, 1908, p. 42 ff.

sharply for his unmeasured, nay, shameless boasting of his gifts, for exciting enmity, strife, dissension and factions, and for inciting to ill-will and murder. "What shall I say," he exclaims, "of the boldness and impudence with which Luther interprets the Testaments, both Old and New, from the first chapter of Genesis to the very end, as a tissue of menaces and imprecations against Popes, bishops and priests, as though through all the ages God had had nothing to do but to thunder at the priesthood."[1] Elsewhere he bewails with noble indignation the fate of his beloved fatherland: "Luther, the foe of peace, and the most worthless of men, has let loose the furies over Germany so that we must regard it as a real mercy if speedy destruction does not ensue. I should have much to write upon the subject if only my grief allowed me."[2]

Zasius and Egranus, however, like others in a similar walk of life and who were disposed to seek a compromise, never attacked the new teachers, their reputation and their supposed wisdom as decidedly as did those whose deeper knowledge of theology taught them how dangerous the errors were.

One well equipped for the literary struggle with Luther was the convert George Wicel, a priest who had married and settled down as a Lutheran pastor and then, after a thorough study of holy Scripture and the Fathers, had resigned his post and published an "*Apologia*" at Leipzig in 1533 to justify his return to the Church of his Fathers.

In a multitude of polemical treatises, often couched in caustic language, he exposed the untenability and the innate contradictions of the Wittenberg doctrines. Of this hated "apostate" Luther speaks in a characteristic letter of 1535.[3] He writes to the Mansfeld Chancellor, Caspar Müller, about a new work of Wicel's: This Masterlet, as he hears—for he himself "read none of their books"—has again been throwing sweetmeats to his swine, the Catholics. "Such guests are well served by such a cook."

Owing to his stay at Wittenberg and Eisleben, Wicel was well fitted to paint a reliable picture of the morals there prevailing. He utilised his experiences in his "*Retectio Lutheranismi*" (1538), and summed up his case against Luther as follows: "The life of the great mass of Evangelicals is so little Evangelical

[1] Stintzing, *ibid.*
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 97. Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 179.
[3] On March 18, 1535, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 137.

that I have thousands and thousands of times felt most heartily ashamed of it. . . . Only too quickly have most of them sucked in the poisonous doctrine, that works are of no avail and that sin is not imputed to the believer."[1] Concerning one phenomenon, which Luther himself bewails as a very pest, viz. the fear of death, which had become the rule since the prevalence of the new teaching, Wicel had some severe things to say; this was strangely at variance with the confidence which Luther's Evangel was supposed to impart. "Is it not a deep disgrace," he says, "that those who, formerly, when they were the followers of Antichrist, to use their own Lutheran phrase, did not fear the plague at all, or at any rate not much, now, as 'Christians,' display such abject terror when it comes? Hardly anyone visits the sick and no one dares to assist those stricken with the plague. No one will even look at them from a distance, and all are seized with a strange panic. Where is that all-prevailing faith that is now so often extolled, where is their love for their neighbour? Tell me, I adjure you in the name of Christ, whether there has ever been less trust or less charity amongst Christians?"[2]

In the conversations held in that same year in the intimate circle at Wittenberg, and preserved for us by Lauterbach the Deacon, Luther frequently alluded to Wicel; at that time the latter was in the midst of his successful literary labours against the Lutherans, and his proposals for reunion, though by no means wholly satisfactory, had even led Duke George of Saxony to summon him to his Court. Luther, with a hatred quite comprehensible under the circumstances, calls him, according to Lauterbach, "the most treacherous of men, insatiable in his jealousy, a scoundrel who does not even deserve an answer"; Wicel himself, he tells us, was well aware he was defending, against his better feelings, a cause altogether wrong; the ungrateful slanderer richly deserved death; only thanks to Luther's kindness, had he found a decent means of livelihood. "Let us despise him! We must be silent, pray and bless," so he concludes, "and not bring new faggots to feed the flames."[3] Luther knew perfectly well that any "new faggots" he might have brought would have burst into flame under Wicel's ardent pen, to his own disadvantage. He does not shrink from indignantly describing Wicel elsewhere as a "sycophant and venomous traitor,"[4] and as "a man full of malice and presumption."[5] He comes along and "boasts of the Fathers. I do not even read his works, for I know his Fathers well; but we have one only Father, Who is in Heaven and Who is over all Fathers."[6] Particularly sensitive was he to Wicel's strictures on

[1] "Retectio," Hb *seq.* Döllinger, "Reformation," 1, p. 57 f.

[2] *Ibid.*, G 2b: "*cepit omnium animos mirus pavor*," etc. Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 61.

[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 159. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 323.

[4] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 159.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 161 f.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

his doctrine of good works, that heel of Achilles of the new Evangel. Wicel, "with scorn and mockery," says, "that we have taught that, 'whoever has once been converted can sin no more, and whatever he does is right and good.' But the same thing happened to St. Paul and he too had to listen to slanderers, who, because he taught that people might be saved without the works of the law and merely by faith in Christ, said: 'Then let us do what is evil and sin lustily that good may come of it,' etc. Let us pray against such blasphemy."[1]

Of the consequences of the new teaching levelled at the meritorious nature of good works, Wicel had said at the end of his "*Apologia*": "The Lutheran sect has opened wide the floodgates to immorality and disorder, so that everybody laments and sighs over it. If there be anything godfearing, good, moral or right to be found in this sect, then it was there before, and did not originate with it. For, show me seven men in seven thousand, who, having been formerly godless and wicked, have now, because they are Lutherans, become good and full of the fear of God. I could, however, point out some, such as had previously led a devout, peaceable, inward and harmless life, who are now quite changed by this Evangel. May but the Lord grant them to see and acknowledge what misery they have excited within the German nation. Amen."[2]

Among Wicel's "blasphemies," as Luther calls them, were some that traversed the latter's assertions that the holy works of penitents and ascetics were utterly worthless, and that the business of a house-agent or tax-collector, provided one went about it in faith, ranked higher than all the pious works of any monk or hermit.[3] "The wretched man," exclaims Luther, angry because of his inability to answer the objection, "most idly attacks us; he has no respect for the labours of their calling which God has commanded each man to perform in his state of life; all this he disregards and merely gapes at superstitious, grand and showy works";[4] "and yet Paul extols the ordinary works of the faithful and lays great stress on them."[5] This was one of his habitual falsehoods, viz. to make out that Wicel and his other opponents looked down on lowly and commonplace works and the unobtrusive performance of the duties of one's calling, more particularly in the life of the world. In reality, however, they recognised in the most large-minded way the high value of the duties of any worldly calling when done in a religious spirit, and repudiated with perfect justice the charge brought against Catholicism of undervaluing the ordinary virtues of the good citizen.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 323.

[2] See A. Räss, "Die Convertiten seit der Reformation," 1, 1866, where the "Apologia" is reprinted, p. 184. Cp. Wicel's remarks above, p. 165 f.

[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 117; "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 420 f.

[4] "Werke," *ibid.* [5] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 118.

The zealous Wicel was not perturbed by Luther's attacks. He continued to damage the Lutheran cause by his writings, though the position he took up in ecclesiastical matters was not always well advised.

Another convert, Veit Amerbach (Amorbach), one of the most capable Humanists of the day, after abandoning the Catholic communion lectured first at Eisleben and then in the philosophical faculty at Wittenberg, till, owing to his patristic studies and after personal conferences with Luther and Melanchthon, he returned to the bosom of the Church in 1543, and at once found a post as lecturer at the University of Ingolstadt. As he declared in a written statement handed to Melanchthon, it was particularly the doctrines of Justification and of the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome that compelled him to side with antiquity and to oppose the innovations.

Too high-minded to abuse his former associates (he even refrained from writing against them), Luther nevertheless, on hearing of his conversion, declared that he would surely turn out later a blasphemer.

"You know," Luther wrote to Lauterbach, "Vitus Amerbach, who left us to go to Ingolstadt, was a man who was never really one of us (1 John ii. 19); he will imitate Eck in his blasphemy of our Word, and perhaps do even worse things."[1] Amerbach having pointed out that the greatest authorities both of East and West had acknowledged the Pope's leadership in the Church, Luther replies in Table-Talk in 1544: "Whence do they get the rotten argument, that the Church must have Rome for its outward head? All history is against anything of the kind. The whole of the West was never under the Pope, nor the whole of the East. It is mere pride on Amerbach's part! O God, this is indeed a fall beyond all other falls! I am sorry about him, for he will occasion great scandal. Poor people, they think not of their last hour."[2] "Ah, it is said of them: They went out from us, from the Apostles. But whence came the devil? From the angels surely. Whence the prostitutes if not from virgins? Whence the knaves if not from the ranks of the pious? Evil must needs come from good."[3]

Amerbach's opinion of the innovations and of the work of the devil was a different one.

In the Preface to his collection of the Capitularies of Charles the Great and Lothair,—the solitary passage in which he alludes to the upheaval he had witnessed, though he refrains from any reference to his former colleagues—he expresses his cherished hope

[1] On Feb. 3, 1544, "Briefe," 5, p. 629.
[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 342.
[3] *Ibid.*

that the Church will ultimately be restored to unity under the successor of Peter; the most pressing thing was to set some bounds to the extraordinary and utterly unrestrained abuse and vituperation, which was not a little promoted by the avarice and filthy venality of the printers, but which the authorities did nothing to prevent. "At times, when I reflect on this disorder," he says, "it seems to me that men are not filled merely with gall and wormwood, but are verily led and set in motion by devils incarnate. But otherwise it cannot be, so long as, within the Church, the faithful are split up into opposing factions. And would that the populace alone were to blame! I am very much deceived if in any of the books of history even one other example is to be met with of such madness, such furious, poisonous railing and drunken invective."[1]

3. Lamentations over the Wounds of the Church and over Her Persecutions

With the defenders of the Church the depravity of Luther's teaching, and the immense injury which his work of apostasy was doing to souls, weighed far more heavily than any of the charges we have heard advanced against his person.

In the beginning, it is true, they were chiefly concerned in refuting his new and daring propositions. But, as the years passed and the ruin increased, startling accounts of the sad state of religion more and more often find a place in their polemics, the writers urging against Lutheranism the decay of faith and morals which had followed in its train. In their words we can feel even to-day the fervour and the profound anxiety with which they sought to admonish their contemporaries against the destroyer of the Sanctuary and his seductive ways.

When Johann Cochlæus composed the Preface to his "*Commentaria de actis et scriptis Martini Lutheri*," he could not refrain, at the sight of the state of Germany, from giving lively expression to his grief.

To him "the greatest misfortune, which no tears can sufficiently deplore," is "the fall of so many immortal souls, destined by the grace of baptism for life everlasting." "This unhappy strife regarding belief," he writes at the commencement, "has torn them from the bosom and the unity of the Church and will bring them to eternal destruction!" In addition to this there is "a frightful subversion of all things such as no previous heresy had ever brought about." The bond of charity and concord

[1] "Præcipuæ constitutiones Caroli M.," etc., Ingolst., 1545, præf. f. A 3a, A 8a; Döllinger, *ibid.*, 1, p. 160.

which unites Christian people has been loosened, discipline undermined, reverence for God destroyed, wholesome fear extinguished, obedience cast aside, and in their lieu prevails sinfulness and a freedom that is alien to God."[1] In the body of the work he describes with pain and indignation how the uncalled preachers behaved. "They come," so he says in one passage, "and prate of that false freedom which is to set us free from all laws of Church, Pope, bishops and Councils. With a cloud of Scriptural texts they undertake to prove, that fasting, prayers, vigils and other penitential works are no good whatever, that Christ has sufficiently atoned for our sins, that faith alone suffices, that our good works, far from being deserving, are really sinful, and so forth. In glibness of tongue and in energy they are not to be outdone."[2]

Johann Wild, Cathedral preacher at Mayence, also describes in moving words the grievous wounds that were being inflicted on the Church. He was a Franciscan Observantine and was distinguished in his Order for his learning and success. After having been from 1528 preacher at the friary church at Mayence, he was appointed in 1539 to the pulpit of the Cathedral, which he retained till his death in 1554. To him it was in part due that what was then the ecclesiastical metropolis of the Rhine Province was preserved in the Catholic faith. He was a type of those men who attempted to meet the spiritual needs of the day, not by loud-voiced polemics, but in a conciliatory and peaceable fashion, and who insisted that the first requirement was to instruct the people thoroughly in the faith, and to raise the moral tone of the faithful. Luther's name he does not mention once in the many volumes of his sermons, but the complaints are none the less heartfelt that he pours forth concerning the devastation wrought in the Lord's vineyard, warning his hearers and exhorting them to pity, labour and prayer in the interests of Catholicism, now in such dire straits.

"Woe to all those," he cries, "who by their preaching have made the world so frivolous and fearless of God! Our forefathers were better advised in this matter. They too preached grace, but they did not forget penance."[3] "But now we see, how, by dint of sermons lacking all sense of modesty and urging faith alone, all fear of God is driven out of the hearts of men."[4] "One thing, viz. faith, has been extolled to the skies, the other, viz. good works, has been trodden in the mire. The result is that we are now for the most part merely Christians in name, but, so far as works are concerned, more depraved and wicked than even Jews or Turks. Yet they expect it to be said of them: These are Evangelical preachers, comforting folk, who know how to quiet people's consciences."[5] "All sorts of wickedness, injustice and frivolity increase from day to day." "Since ever there were

[1] "Comment.," p. 1. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[3] N. Paulus, "Johann Wild" (3. "Vereinsschr. der Görres-Ges.," 1893), p. 15.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Christians in the world a godly life has never been so little esteemed as now."[1] This, according to him, is the chief cause of all the "very grievous sufferings of the Church," in comparison with which the spoliation of the clergy was nothing, of the loss of souls, and ruin of religious life. "The cause of the Church's pain is that her children have been and are so lamentably led astray, that they refuse any longer to acknowledge their own mother, but avoid and flee from her, despise her old age, mock at her wrinkles, laugh at her feebleness, pay no heed to her admonitions, transgress her laws, forsake her doctrine, reject her commands, despise her sacraments, cling to her enemies, wallow in every sort of sin and defile themselves with all kinds of errors. Who can tell all the misery which is now to be met with among Christians by reason of their sins and errors?" How should this not cause pain to the Church, our loving Mother?[2]—When the discord was on the point of breaking out into an armed conflict, this patriot, deeply moved at the sight of the dissensions that ravaged the Fatherland, exclaimed: Germany has become a byword to her neighbours. "Everybody wants a bit of us." We have to submit to bitter scorn. They say: "Ha, these are the haughty Germans who help to destroy all other countries and have a finger in every war; now they are going to set to on each other. . . . Is it not a lamentable thing that foreigners and aliens should speak thus derisively of us? . . . We must lay it before God and beg Him to forgive those whose fault it is that we cannot reach any agreement. I have always feared this outcome, yet I ever furthered and counselled peace and unity."[3]

In a writing presented at the Diet of Ratisbon in 1541 by Duke William of Bavaria, the acts of violence committed by the protesting Estates for years past were thus summarised: "The Protestants clamour for peace and justice, but in their actions they violate both." The Catholic Estates "are continually molested on account of their religion, and great loss and injury are inflicted on them. Contrary to the commandment of God, in defiance of law and Christian usages, the Protestants forbid them to preach the Gospel and the Word of God openly; their churches and monasteries are seized by force, their subjects enticed away from them by all manner of devices and taken under the shelter of the Protestants; their religious foundations and property are torn from them mercilessly and used for alien purposes, the graves and monuments of the pious dead, both high and low, are desecrated and destroyed; the pictures and images of our Saviour Jesus Christ, of the chaste Virgin Mary and the dear Saints are pitifully damaged and smashed to pieces." "The Catholics have no dearer wish than for peace and order and justice; they too were clamouring for these, and not like the Protestants, trying at the same time to upset them. All they asked was to be left in the enjoyment of their holy Christian faith and the ordinances of the Christian Church, and

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 35. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 40. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 13 f.

not to have their goods violently taken from them."[1]—These complaints were, however, ineffective, as the Protestant party had already the upper hand in the College of Electors.

At the Diet of Worms in 1545 the complaints were renewed on the Catholic side: "The Protestants have made themselves masters of churches and monasteries and have driven into misery all who wished to abide by the old faith. They have invaded bishoprics and have been reckless of justice and peace; have constrained the poor inhabitants to embrace their religion, as, for instance, in the land of Brunswick, where they had no other right than the might of the sword. They trample under foot and oppress everything, and then complain of being themselves oppressed." "They are insatiable in their demands and are for ever producing fresh cards to play, at every Diet putting forward fresh claims which they insist on having conceded to them before they will take part in the transactions or vote supplies."[2] The Catholics further declared in the sittings of a committee at Worms, in answer to the charges of their opponents concerning the real abuses which prevailed among the bishops and elsewhere: "Scandals and abuses innumerable certainly existed and were openly flaunted, and were growing worse and worse nowadays, because, owing to the perilous times and the teaching of novel sects and preachers, all good works were being abandoned, and unbelief and contempt for religion was becoming the custom among high and low. Many thousand livings stood vacant and the people were without helm or rudder." "Where were the schools and the Divine worship? Where the foundations and endowments for the poor which had been so numerous twenty or thirty years ago?" "What the Protestants call proclaiming the Word of God is for the most part, as they themselves complain, mere slander and abuse of the Pope and the clergy and a general reviling of mankind." The pulpit has "degenerated into a chair of scurrility at which foreign nations are shuddering." Not many years before Luther had openly exhorted the preachers to "denounce the Duke of Brunswick in their sermons as a servant of the devil, likewise the Archbishop of Mayence and all followers of the Pope."[3]

"If we wish to discover the causes of the war which is undoubtedly at hand," so the Cologne doctor, Carl van der Plassen, who was well acquainted with the conditions in Germany, wrote from the Diet of Worms, "we must bear in mind all that has happened in Germany since the subjugation of the peasants by the Princes and municipal authorities, all the countless violations of human and Divine law, of the public peace, of property, civic rights, conscience and honour. Let us but reckon up the number

[1] "Corp. ref.," 4, pp. 450–455; Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), 6, p. 152 f.

[2] Janssen, *ibid.*, p. 264 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 264 f. Passages taken from Luther's writing, "An die Pfarherrn wider den Wucher zu predigen," "Werke," Erl. ed., 23, p. 282 ff.

of churches and monasteries which have been destroyed and pillaged during these twenty years, and all the accompanying crime and iniquity. And to what purpose have these stolen goods been applied ? What has become of all the Church property, all the treasures ? . . . A new religion has been forced upon the people by might and by stratagem, and they have been forbidden under threat of punishment to carry on the old service of God, with its rites and Christian usages. Is this the vaunted freedom of the Gospel, to persecute and coerce others, to imprison them or drive them into exile ? Everything that was formerly reverenced has now fallen into contempt, with the result that right and property are no longer respected ; the endless disturbances in matters of religion have upset the whole national equilibrium ; discipline, loyalty and respectability have vanished. . . . What misery results from want of clergy and schools even in the lands which have remained Catholic ! Princes and towns, making their boast of the Gospel, have not been satisfied with introducing the new Church system into their own territories, but have invaded the Catholic bishoprics and secular dominions and turned everything topsy-turvy in order to set up their own institutions. The Schmalkalden confederates extend their operations from year to year and grow more and more audacious. At this moment they are actually preaching a war of extermination against the Pope and his adherents. There will be no checking them if the sword of the Emperor is not used to restrain them, as it ought to have been long ago."[1]

Another Catholic contemporary complains in similar fashion : " Religion is perverted, all obedience to the Emperor destroyed, justice set aside and insolence of all sorts everywhere encouraged." The Emperor " has tried many and various means of putting a stop to this insubordination, but all measures have been fruitless and he must now wield in earnest the sword that God put into his hands to bring back his and our fatherland to peace, order and unity."[2] In the Emperor's own circle the conviction had ripened that so much injustice had been done to Catholics and so much detriment to the Church, that armed intervention was the only course that remained. " Things had come to such a pass in Germany," said the Imperial Chancellor Granvell to Farnese, the Papal Legate, about the time of the Diet of Worms, " that neither the Emperor's nor the Pope's name any longer carried any weight ; indeed, it was to be feared that the Protestants looked upon the opening of the Council as a signal for war, and that they would at once begin to equip themselves not merely for the sake of being ready for any emergency, but rather in order to suppress the Catholics and to make an attack on Italy, the object of their bitter hatred."[3]

[1] On May 29, 1545. Janssen, *ibid.*, p. 286 f.

[2] Hortleder, " Von Rechtmässigkeit usw. Karls V.," 1645, p. 486 ff. Janssen, *ibid.*, p. 288.

[3] M. J. Schmidt, " Neuere Gesch. der Deutschen," 1, 1785, p. 23 f. Janssen, *ibid.*

4. The Literary Opposition

Most of those who opposed Luther in the literary field have already made their appearance in the various episodes narrated in the foregoing pages. In the present section, which is in the nature of a retrospect and amplification of certain points, we must first touch on the charge frequently put forward by Luther, viz. that it was the furious polemics of his foes which drew from him his violent rejoinders, and, particularly in the earlier part of his career, drove him to take the field against Rome.

We have already repeatedly admitted the too great acrimony of some of the writings against Luther, the exasperation they frequently ill conceal and their needlessly strong and insulting language ; of this we saw instances in the case of Tetzel, Eck, Prierias, Emser and many others.[1]

It can, however, readily be proved by a comparison with Luther's own writings, that the champions of the Church fell far short of their opponent, generally speaking, in the matter of violence and contemptuous satire. Luther not only maintained in this respect his supremacy as a speaker, but the small account he made of truth[2] lent an immense advantage to his overwhelming invective. It is also easy to discern a difference in the writings directed against his revolutionary movement, according as they were written earlier or later. At first, when it was merely a question of exposing his theological errors, his opponents were comparatively calm ; the first counter theses and the discussions to which they led are replete with the ponderous learning of the Schoolmen, though, even there, we find occasional traces of the indignation felt that the sanctuary of the faith should have been attacked in so wanton a fashion. But after the actual subversion of the Church had begun and the social peril of the radical innovations had revealed itself, the voices of Luther's opponents grow much harsher. Many, in their anguish at the growing evil, do not spare the person of the man responsible for it all, whose own methods of controversy, unfortunately, became a pattern even to his foes. At no time, not even in a warfare such as that then going on, can all the things be justified which were said by Augustine Alveld, Franz Arnoldi, Johann

[1] See above, *passim.*
[2] See, for instance, above, pp. 96 ff., 102 ff.

Cochlæus, Paul Bachmann, Duke George, King Henry VIII and even, occasionally, by Sir Thomas More.

What helped to poison the language was, on the one hand, the coarse tone then generally prevalent amongst the German people, which contrived to find its way into the literary treatment of theological questions to an extent never heard of before, and, on the other, the love of the Humanists for mockery and satire, to which end they ransacked the storehouse of antiquity, classical or otherwise. Among earnest Catholics the most powerful factor was overpowering indignation at the sight of such ruthless trampling under foot of the religion of their forefathers and of a faith so closely bound up with the greatness of the fatherland and with every phase of life. Their indignation led them to utter things that were less praiseworthy than the feeling which inspired them.

Besides this, there was a great temptation to use, as the best way of testifying to their abhorrence for the opponent of religious truth, that drastic language handed down by past ages, indeed largely borrowed from the Bible, particularly from the Prophets of the Old Testament. Of this, not theological writers only, but even official ecclesiastical documents, had made such liberal use, that scholars had it at their finger-tips. Even in our own day such mediæval thunders are still sometimes heard rumbling, particularly among the Latin races. When dealing with the Bull of Excommunication against Luther, we already had occasion to remark that much in it was due to the after-effects of the older habits of speech usual in earlier condemnations.[1] It may be mentioned of Hadrian VI that in a stern missive addressed in 1522 to Frederick the Elector of Saxony, he denounced Luther as a " serpent " infecting heaven and earth with the venom of its tongue, as a " boar " laying waste the vineyard of the Lord, as a " thief " who broke in pieces the cross of Christ, as a man with " diabolical, impious and pestilential lips." He also, in the words of Scripture, tells the Prince that Luther, whom he was protecting, is a devil who has assumed the appearance of an angel of light.[2]

[1] Vol. ii., p. 48.

[2] " *Transfiguratur coram te satanas ille in angelum lucis.*" The text in Raynaldus, " *Annales eccles.*," ann. 1522, n. 72.

As regards the beginnings of the controversy, both series of Theses advanced by Johann Tetzel in 1517 against Luther's attack on the system of indulgences, are exclusively of a technical nature and never even mention by name the originator of the controversy.[1]

Luther, on the other hand, after the publication of the ninety-five Theses, in his German sermon on Indulgences and Grace,[2] addressed himself directly to the populace. He poured out his scorn on the school-opinions of the theologians and the "bawling" of the envious; they seek, he says, your "pennies," not your souls, and preach for the sake of their "money-box." He appealed very cleverly to their more sordid instincts, hinting that the money might be better spent on the poor in their own neighbourhood than on the building of St. Peter's; at the end, sure of his success with the multitude, he abused those who called him a heretic, as "darkened intellects who had never even sniffed a Bible . . . and had never grasped their own teaching."

What was the nature of Tetzel's reply? His "Vorlegung" of the Sermon,[3] being intended for the people, was naturally written in German, but in the wearisome style of the Latin theology of the Schools. In point of matter and logical accuracy it was indeed far superior to Luther's superficialities, but the clumsy German in which it was couched and the number of quotations it borrowed from the Fathers could only make it distasteful to the reader. It is hardly possible to recognise in its language the popular orator who was such a favourite with the people. The seriousness of his tone contrasts strangely with Luther's airy style. It is easy to believe his honest assurance, that he was ready to submit his views to the judgment of the learned and to the ecclesiastical authorities, and to risk even life itself for the holy Faith of the Catholic past. Only towards the end of the short work, when refuting Luther's twentieth proposition, does Tetzel, not very skilfully, retaliate upon his opponent—though even here he does not name him—for the coarse and abusive language he had used

[1] At the end of the second series of Theses ("Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., "Opp. lat var.," 1, p. 312) occur the words, "*bestia, quæ montem tetigerit*," the sole quotation from that sort of biblical language mentioned above.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 239 ff.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 4 ff.

[3] Löscher, "Reformationsacta," 1, p. 484 ff.

in this thesis. Tetzel says, it would be seen from a consideration of their reasons which of the two it was who had "never sniffed a Bible," never grasped his own teaching and applied to the study of theology "a brain like a sieve"; which of the two was the schismatic, heretic, etc.

In his reply to the "Vorlegung," which he published in his own name under the title "Eyn Freiheyt dess Sermons Bebstlichen Ablass,"[1] Luther spared no venom: Sun and moon might well wonder at the light of wisdom displayed by such a poetaster; evidently he had a superabundance of paper and leisure; but his artificial flowers and withered leaves must be scattered to the winds; he had dared to treat "the scriptural text, which is our comfort (Rom. xv. 4), as a sow would treat a sack of oats." His opponent's offer to risk a trial by fire or water for the Faith, he treats with the utmost scorn and derision: "My honest advice to him would be, modestly to restrict himself to the juice of the grape and to the steam that arises from the roast goose to which he is so partial."—Some Protestants have urged that Luther's rudeness of tone, here displayed for the first time, may be explained by his opponent's example. How little this defence of Luther accords with the true state of the case is plain from the above.

As regards Silvester Prierias the matter stands somewhat differently. The "*Dialogus*," composed by the Master of the Palace in hot haste in reply to Luther's "arrogant Theses on the power of the Pope" (the ninety-five Indulgence Theses he had nailed to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg), a work written with all the weighty scholarship of the Schoolmen and criticising each thesis in detail, contained in its thirty-three octavo pages a number of exaggerations and words calculated to offend.

The lively Southerner was not content with proving that much in Luther's Theses was provocative, contrary to dogma, criminal, seductive, sarcastic, etc., but, even in the Dedication to Leo X, he starts off by saying that: Luther had dared to rise up against the truth and the Holy See, but that he, the writer, would see whether "his iron nose and brazen neck were really unbreakable."[2] Luther preferred to "snap secretly" rather than to put forward plain doctrines.[3] "If it is in the nature of dogs to snap, then I feel sure you must have had a dog for your father, for you are

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 380 ff.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 10 ff.
[2] "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 345. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 368.

ever ready to bite."[1] Luther having in one passage put forward a statement that was true, Prierias tells him : " You mix a little truth with much that is false, and thus you are a spiritual leper, for you have a spotted skin that shines partly with true, partly with false colours."[2] Referring to the building of St. Peter's at Rome, he says to Luther rather maliciously : " You blame in the case of the first church of Christendom what was extolled when other churches were being built. Had you received a fat bishopric from the Pope with a plenary indulgence for the erection of your church, then, perhaps, you would have found friendly words in plenty and have belauded the Indulgences on which now you pour contempt."[3]

These are lapses in style which a high official of the Pope should have known better than to commit.

Yet it is clear from Luther's reply that they did not exasperate him nearly so much as did Prierias's energetic repudiation of his teaching and his calm exposure of the untenable nature of his assertions. What alarmed him was the fact that a highly placed Papal dignitary should have shown the contrast between his innovations and the theology and practice of the Church ; he now perceived clearly the practical consequences of his undertaking and the direct entanglement it would involve with Rome. Hence the frame of mind in which he composed his " *Responsio ad Dialogum,*" etc. (1518),[4] was not due so much to his opponent's personalities as to the whole aspect of affairs, to the shakiness of his own position and to his fierce determination to win respect for and to further at the expense of Rome the new doctrine which he now had ready-made in his mind. Whoever recalls the spirit which breathes in his Commentary on Romans and the violent language found in his sermons and letters even before 1518, will readily estimate at its true worth the statement, that what drove him onwards was the insolence of Prierias. Unfortunately, Prierias's " Dialogue " shares the fate of the Latin works which appeared in Germany in defence of Catholicism in the early days of the struggle with Luther : Save by a few theologians, they are never read, and, indeed, even were they read, it is doubtful whether they would be rightly understood except by those familiar with Scholasticism ; hence discretion in passing judgment is doubly necessary.

In the Reply of 1518 now under consideration, Luther, in view of the person and position of his opponent, and of the possible consequences, is more restrained in his abuse than in other writings soon to follow. Yet, anxious as he was to furnish a real answer to the criticisms of an author so weighty, we find irony, rudeness and attempts to render ridiculous the " senile " objections of the " Thomaster,"

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 370. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 351.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 365. [4] *Ibid.*, 2, p. 1 *seq.*

the " sophist " and all his " taratantara," intermingled with unwarrantable attacks on " Thomistic " theology, that storehouse whence his opponent purloined " his phrases and his shouting." The reply opens with the words : " Your Dialogue, Reverend Father, has reached me ; it is a rather high-flown writing, quite Italian and Thomistic." It also ends in the same vein. " If for the future you don't bring into the arena a Thomas armed with better weapons, then don't expect to find again such consideration as I have just shown you. I have bridled myself so as not to return evil for evil. Good-bye."

When, in 1519, the Dominican whom he had thus insulted published, first a " *Replica* " in the form of a short letter addressed to Luther, and then the " *Epitome* " (an abstract of his investigations into the theological questions then under discussion), it was impossible for Luther to complain of any too harsh treatment ; the tone of the " *Replica,*" although dealing with Luther's attacks on the person of the Roman scholar, falls immeasurably short of his assailant's in point of bitterness. It is conciliatory, indeed proffers an olive-branch, should the Wittenberg professor retract the new doctrines which Rome was determined to condemn.[1] As for the " *Epitome,*" it is merely a theological review of the doctrines involved, which it clearly states and establishes whilst vigorously refuting all opinions to the contrary. It is accompanied by a grave warning to Luther not to impugn the authority of the Roman Church.[2]

This was, however, sufficient to let loose the anger of the German Reformer, who meanwhile had advanced considerably, and whose wrath now manifested itself in his rejoinders. Such was his presumption that he actually reprinted in Germany both works of Prierias as soon as they had been published ; the " *Replica* " he introduced with the derisive remark, that, as the author had threatened to give birth to more, they must pray that he might suffer no abortions.[3] His reprint of the " *Epitome* " in 1520 was accompanied by contemptuous and satirical annotations, and by a preface and postscript where he breaks out into the language already described, about Antichrist seated in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 68 *seq.* [2] *Ibid.*, p. 81 *seq.*
[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 50 ; " Opp. lat. var.," 2, p. 68.

the Temple of God in the Roman Babylon, about the happiness of the separated Greeks and Bohemians and about the washing of hands in the blood of the Popish Sodom.[1] It was the seething ferment in Luther's own mind, not anything that Prierias had said, that was really responsible for such outbursts. The flood-gates had now been thrown open, and even from the Catholic side came many a wave of indignation to lend acrimony to the contest.

Referring to Luther's words on bloodshed, we hear, for instance, Thomas Murner speaking of "the furious blood-hound, Martin Luther of execrable memory, the blasphemous, runaway monk and murderous bloodhound, who wants to wash his hands in the blood of the priests!"[2]

How far Hieronymus Emser allowed himself to go in his hostility to Luther is plain from his first tract, "*A venatione Luteriana Ægocerotis assertio*," of Nov., 1519, in which he replies to an attack of Luther's on an epistle he (Emser) had sent to Provost Johann Zack. Luther, in the title, had addressed him as the "he-goat" ("*ad Ægocerotem*") on account of the goat's head figuring in his coat of arms. Emser retorts: "It is plainly beyond your ability to send out into the world any writing of yours that is not replete with houndish fury and bristles, as it were, with canine fangs. Your father is Belial, the ancestor of all insolent monks." He paints a frightful picture of Luther's career and character the better to prove that such a man had no right to sit in judgment on him.

Luther's "An den Bock zu Leyptzck," dating from the beginning of 1520, was replied to by Emser in his "An den Stier zu Wittenberg," whereupon Luther retorted with "Auff des Bocks zu Leypczick Antwort," to which Emser replied in his pamphlet: "Auff des Stieres tzu Wiettenberg wiettende Replica," and his larger work "Against the Unchristian book of M. Luther to the German Nobility"; this Luther countered by his "Auff das ubirchristlich . . . Buch Bocks Emssers."

During the years 1521–1522 Emser wrote no less than eight tracts against the Wittenberg Professor. The Humanist and clever man of letters has left therein many a witty

[1] *Ibid.*, 6, pp. 328–348=2, pp. 79–108. See the actual words in our vol. ii., p. 12 f. Cp. vol. i., p. 338 f., for the first interchange of amenities between the two champions.

[2] In W. Walther, "Für Luther," p. 215.

page; a refreshing sincerity is one of his characteristics.[1] On the whole, however, what F. A. Scharpff says applies to these and the later polemics of this zealous champion of the Church: They "are composed in a tone of violent personality, nor does either combatant seek any longer to restrain the 'Old Adam,' as both at the outset had pledged themselves to do."[2]

Another of Luther's earliest literary opponents was Johann Eck, the author of the "Obelisks," on the Indulgence Theses. Like the works of Tetzel and Prierias, this tract is chiefly concerned in a calm discussion of the matter in dispute, though it does not refrain from occasionally describing this or that opinion of Luther's as a "rash, corrupt, impudent assertion," as an insipid, unblushing error, a ridiculous mistake, etc. The severest remark, however, and that which incensed Luther beyond all the rest was, that certain passages in the Indulgence Theses, owing to a confusion of ideas, made admissions "containing Bohemian poison," i.e. savouring of the errors of Hus.[3] Subsequent to this Eck, however, wrote to Carlstadt a letter which was intended for Luther, where he says in a conciliatory tone: "To offend Martin was never my intention."[4] Nor did he at first print his "Obelisks," but merely sent the tract to his bishop and his friends. Luther, on the other hand, had the work printed in August, 1518, together with his own "Asterisks," and, after circulating them privately among his acquaintances, finally published them together. In the "*Asterisci*" he speaks of the behaviour of Eck, his quondam "friend," as most insidious and iniquitous ("*insidiosissimum iniquissimum*"), and mocks at his "grand, not to say high-flown," preface. He says: "Hardly was I able to refrain from laughter"; Eck must have written his "Obelisks" during the Carnival; wearing the mask of genius he had produced a chaos. His

[1] G. Kawerau ("Hieronymus Emser," 1898, p. 2) remarks that it must be admitted of Emser, "that he was an honest curmudgeon, averse to all subterfuge and pretence, amazingly frank in his admissions concerning himself, and, in controversy, very rude. Only rarely do we see him departing from this frankness."

[2] "KL.," 4^2, col. 483.

[3] "Lutheri Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 410.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 408, in the editor's Introduction to the "Asterisks" and "Obelisks."

writing adduced nothing concerning the Bible, the Fathers and the Canons, but was all arch-scholastic; had he, Luther, wished to peripateticise he could, with one puff, have blown away all these musty cobwebs, etc.[1]

Johann Eck, who was professor of theology at the University of Ingolstadt and at the same time parish-priest and preacher, enjoyed a great reputation among the Catholics on account of his works against Luther, particularly those on the Primacy, on Purgatory, the Mass and other Catholic doctrines and practices, no less than on account of his printed sermons and his general activity on behalf of the Church.

The indefatigable defender of the Church composed amongst other writings the "*Enchiridion locorum communium adv. Lutherum et alios hostes ecclesiæ*" (1525). The work was of great service and formed an excellent guide to many.

In this well-arranged and eminently practical book the questions then under debate are dealt with for the instruction of Catholics and the confutation of heretics; excerpts from Scripture and from the Fathers are in each instance quoted in support of the Catholic teaching, and then the objections of opponents are set forth and answered. Not only were the Church, the Papal Primacy, Holy Scripture, Faith and Works, the Sacraments, the Veneration of the Saints, Indulgences, Purgatory and other similar points of doctrine examined in this way, but even certain matters of discipline and the ecclesiastico-political questions of the day, such as payments to Rome, the ornaments of the churches and the ceremonies of Divine Worship, the use of Latin in the Mass, the disadvantage of holding disputations with heretics, and even the question of the Turkish war. Hence the work amounted to a small arsenal of weapons for use in the controversial field. The tone is, however, not always moderate and dispassionate. The author was clear-sighted enough to avoid the pitfall into which other writers lapsed who cherished undue hopes of a settlement by give and take. In much that he says he still speaks from the mediæval standpoint, for instance, concerning the death penalty due to heretics; this he defends on the strength of the identical passages from the Old Testament to which Luther and his followers appealed for the putting to death of blasphemers and apostates from the true faith.

Eck had the satisfaction of seeing his "*Enchiridion*," within four years, reprinted four times in Bavaria, twice at Tübingen, and at Cologne, Paris and Lyons. Before 1576 it had been reimpressed forty-five times. In the midst of his other literary

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 281; "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 411.

works and his fatiguing labours as preacher and professor at the University of Ingolstadt, the scholar never forgot his useful "*Enchiridion*," but amended it and added to it as occasion demanded. In 1529, in a new edition which he dedicated to Conrad von Thuengen, bishop of Würzburg, he looks back in the dedicatory preface on the ten years that had passed since his disputation at Leipzig, and voices his grief at the immense advance the apostasy had made with the course of time.

"People have outgrown themselves," Eck exclaims, "they exalt themselves against God just as Lucifer once did, but like him too they fall into the abyss and come to despise the teaching of God." "Whoever does not hold fast to the tradition of the Church and to the unanimous consent of the Fathers and the Councils must fall into the cesspool of the worst errors." These words are characteristic of Eck's unwavering adherence to authority.

He goes on to apply this to Luther: "Luther and those who follow him prefer to rise up in their foolish daring rather than bow to the rule of faith; they open their offensive mouth against the holy Fathers and the whole Church; they exalt their own judgment with momentous and arrogant blindness above that of the most august representatives of the teaching office." True enough Luther had begun softly by merely publishing some theses against the system of indulgences with which many might still agree; but then he had gone on step by step and had increased his partisans by proclaiming a Christian freedom which in reality savoured more of Mohammed. It is our sins, Eck admits, that are the cause of the unhappy success of his work. "From the poisoned root new and corrupt shoots are constantly springing up, and of their new sects we see no end. In our unhappy days we have experienced the fury of the iconoclasts; Capharnaites have arisen to whom Christ's presence in the Sacrament is a hard saying; Anabaptists, who refuse baptism to children but bestow it on adults, and, amongst these teachers, every day fresh divisions arise so that the heretics are even more prolific than rabbits. Yes, God is angry with us and allows this because we do not turn to Him with powerful and fervent prayer."

He then goes on to encourage the Bishop of Würzburg to offer vigorous resistance and points modestly to his own self-sacrificing labours.

"However much heresy may gain the upper hand, the watchmen of Sion must not keep silence; their voice must ring out like a clarion against the Philistines who scoff at the hosts of the Lord. We must oppose them with all the powers of our mind and defend the Tower of David, guarded, as Scripture says, with a thousand shields. This, zealous men, equipped with holy learning, have already done. I myself, as the least of all, have also entered the arena and expose d myself to the teeth of the wild beasts. At Leipzig I stood up and disputed for twenty days with Luther, the Prince of Dragons, and with Carlstadt; at Baden [in Switzerland, in 1526] too, I had to sustain a combat

for several days with Œcolampadius the Capharnaite, and his comrades. I have also wrestled with them from a distance in several little works which I published in Germany and Italy."

Again, in 1541, in the evening of his days († 1543), in an eighth edition of the "*Enchiridion*" dedicated to Cardinal Alexander Farnese, while urging him to increased efforts for the bringing about of a Council, he could point to his own three-and-twenty years of incessant conflict with heresy. "O God," he cries at the sight of the extent to which the evil had grown, "what times are ours!" "Every bulwark against arbitrary private judgment has been torn down; Luther has taught all how to dare all things. Since he has overthrown the authority of the Councils, the Popes, the Holy Fathers and all the Christian Universities, every man, no matter how mad or hair-brained he may be, is free to teach his new fancies to mankind."[1]

Yet the author seeks to revive hope and confidence in his own mind and in that of his Catholic readers, and, to this end, quotes on the last page the saying of St. Jerome, which he applies to the misfortunes of his own day: "During the years of persecution the priests of the Church must tell the faithful boldly and confidently: Your churches will be rebuilt; have no fear, peace and unity will once more enter in.—Yes truly, by God's Mercy there will come an end to the heresies of Luther, Zwingli, Œcolampadius, Blaurer, Osiander, Schnepf and all their ilk, and the olden truth of faith will flourish again. Grant this, Good Jesus, and grant it speedily!" Invocations such as these accord well with the exhortations to pray for the erring which Eck was fond of introducing in this as well as in his other books.

Eck's writings in defence of the faith include learned as well as popular works, and he was also indefatigable in his labours in the ministry.[2]

Johann Cochlæus, who like Eck was one of the more

[1] "*Enchiridion*," Ingolst., 1556, f. 167, 167'. In the prefatory letter of dedication to Cardinal Farnese, Eck expresses himself in his usual manner against the ill-advised attempts of Catholics at mediation: "*Hinc parum profecit conventus Ratisponensis* (1541) *in causa fidei et plurimorum fidelium exspectationem fefellit.*"—In the matter of religious conferences and disputations Eck had ripe experience on his side. Though once very ready to accept a challenge to dispute, he nevertheless wrote later in the "*Enchiridion*" concerning controversies with heretics: "*Hæretici non quærunt disputationem nisi multis malitiis involutam. . . . Fraudulenter obtendunt disputare non coram doctis et literatis ac in theologia exercitatis, sed coram indoctis, vulgaribus laicis*"; the learned men at the Universities would otherwise have already tackled Luther. After mentioning the other disadvantages of the disputations he concludes: "*Catholici ergo debent vitare disputationem cum huiusmodi*" (*ibid.*, p. 163 *seq.*).

[2] The state of his Ingolstadt parish and Eck's pastoral labours have recently been placed in a clear and favourable light by J. Greving in his "Johann Ecks Pfarrbuch," 1908 ("RGl. Stud. und Texte," Hft. 4–5).

famous of Luther's opponents, had a keen and versatile mind († 1552). He first made Luther's personal acquaintance at Worms,[1] and entered the lists against him in 1522 with his "*De gratia sacramentorum*"; from that time forward he kept a watch on all that Luther wrote, so as to be in readiness to reply to or refute it as occasion arose. He himself gives us the long list of his publications against Luther, in his "*Commentaria de actis . . . Lutheri*," the work in which he sums up his recollections of the struggles of his time.

From these "*Commentaria*" of Cochlæus, despite the disparaging treatment accorded them by Sleidanus, "more is to be gleaned concerning the history of the Reformation than from many bungling Protestant eulogies." Such, at least, is the opinion of C. Krafft, himself a Protestant.[2]

The writer sought after the truth and wrote with honest indignation. In spite of disappointments, and even privations, he remained faithful to the Church, making during his career many a sacrifice for his cherished convictions; he himself relates how he could not find a printer for his works against Luther and was forced himself to defray a part of the expense of publication, whereas every press was eager to print Luther's books owing to the demand anticipated.

If, in Cochlæus's writings, too great passion is often apparent, this may well have been due to that depraved humanism and neo-classicism under the influence of which, more perhaps than any other Catholic man of letters, he stood. We have an instance of this in his "Seven-headed Luther," which he composed in 1529 at Dresden, whither he had been summoned on Emser's death.[3] This book, like his later "Commentaries," denotes the climax of his polemics. In the dedication he says that the seven-headed monster could not have been born either of God or of Nature, since neither God nor Nature was capable of such an abortion; rather, it must be an offspring of the evil one, who had deceived man and worked him harm, in Paradise under the guise of a serpent, and, often later, under the form

[1] See above, p. 258.

[2] "Z. f. preuss. Gesch.," 5, p. 481.

[3] "Septiceps Lutherus, ubique sibi suis scriptis contrarius, in visitationem Saxonicam editus," Dresdæ, 1529; in part repeated in the "*Commentaria*," 1549, F. 196 C.

of fauns, satyrs, Sileni and various enchantments. In Africa, according to the ancients, there had been a dragon with three or four heads, and Geryon, whom Hercules slew, had also had three heads. But a monster with seven heads, such as was Luther with his sevenfold doctrine, had never been ushered into the world by any country, but must be a creation of the devil. The wicked, perverse, insane apostate monk, long since destined to damnation, had no scruple in deceiving and assailing every upright man with lies, mockery, blasphemy and every kind of nastiness, or in pouring forth seditious falsehoods and insults like an infuriated lioness. The seven-headed hoodman, or hooded dragon, was causing all too much confusion in Germany with his seven heads and was polluting it all with his deadly poison. King Saul, he continues, had sinned in not rooting out the people of Amalek. But to whom did the name of Amalek apply more aptly than to the Lutherans? For Amalek's was a bestial nation, living bestially according to the flesh, just as the Lutherans—particularly their idol, viz. this monk with his nun—were now doing. In this mad devil's minister not one crumb of any kind of virtue remained, etc.[1]

Apart from his too rhetorical and acrimonious tone other unsympathetic features met with in Cochlæus are his frequent petitions to high dignitaries of the Church, in Germany and even in Rome, for material assistance; his complaints that he was not taken seriously enough; his too great eagerness, during the first years of the struggle, to hold a disputation with Luther; too much pushfulness and sometimes a certain credulity, not to speak of occasional lapses into a frivolity which, like his rhetoric, recalls the more blatant faults of Humanism and ill beseemed a man anxious to censure the morals of his opponents. He deemed it right and proper, for instance, to write under an assumed name a work against the Reformers' wives and matrimonial relationships, where, in colloquial form and in a manner highly offensive, he introduces much that was mere tittle-tattle and quite without foundation. His authorship of this "Private Conversation" has been proved up to the hilt in recent times.[2]

[1] Cp. *ibid.*, F. III′ *seq.*: "*Non ex Deo sed ex diabolo esse tantam in doctrina dissensionem. . . . Cucullatus draco iste noster,*" etc.—M. Spahn, "Joh. Cochläus," Berlin, 1898.

[2] N. Paulus, "Katholik," 1894, 2, p. 571 ff.

Among the ranks of the opponents of Lutheranism Johann Faber and Frederick Nausea, both of them bishops of Vienna, hold a high place. The efforts of these two theologians to elucidate controverted points and to refute Luther were much appreciated in the Catholic circles of that day.

In the more popular field quite a number of good speakers and writers belonging to various Religious Orders, particularly the German Dominicans, distinguished themselves for their zeal in the campaign against Lutheranism. Johann Mensing, who became a licentiate at Wittenberg in 1517 and was Luther's best-hated opponent, was a member of the Order of St. Dominic; so also was Augustine von Gètelen, of whose sermons the Lutheran preacher Martin Undermark admitted, that, " with his tongue he was able to sway the people as he pleased ";[1] Matthias Sittardus, Johann Dietenberger and Ambrosius Pelargus were also all Dominicans, nor did they confine themselves to preaching, but were all of them authors of publications suited to the times. Michael Vehe, another Dominican, was renowned for his ability to wield the pen in German not less than for his Latin discourses from the pulpit. His brother friar, Johann Fabri, earned praise as a preacher and as a clever popular writer. The Protestant preacher H. Rocholl wrote of him: " The turn of what he writes gives proof of great eloquence and his language is oratorically fine; his exhortations are also from an homiletic point of view quite excellent."[2] Antonius Pirata of the Dominican friary at Constance received the following encomium from Erasmus in a letter to Laurinus: " He is a respected man of good morals and profound learning, who displays in his sermons an eloquence truly wonderful."[3] Conrad Köllin and Jacob Hoogstraaten also adorned the Dominican Order in Germany at that time with their learning, though their interest lay more in scholastic theology than in popular works.

All the above belonged to the German province of a single Order, and, altogether, quite thirty Dominicans might be enumerated who engaged in controversy with Luther. Amongst the polemists hailing from other Orders and

[1] N. Paulus, " Die deutschen Dominikaner," etc., p. 78.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 258. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

deserving honourable mention was the zealous and scholarly Franciscan Caspar Schatzgeyer, also another Franciscan, Thomas Murner, to whom we shall return immediately, the Augustinian Johann Hoffmeister and the Carmelite Eberhard Billick.[1]

The reason that the old Orders, with the exception of the Dominicans, did not furnish more controversialists was in great part due to the disastrous effect of the apostasy on their houses. Many of their subjects, deluded by Lutheranism, forsook their cells, and those who remained were frequently exposed to severe persecution. Many monasteries were not only deprived of their means of subsistence, but, owing to the new spirit of the age and the material difficulties of the monastic life, the supply of novices began to run short.

During this period of the German Church's distress the secular clergy were not behindhand in furnishing tried combatants, though the influence of the new ideas and the decline in morals, particularly during the preceding thirty or forty years, had brought ecclesiastical life and learning to an even lower level than before. There were, however, still some cheering examples to be met with. Conspicuous amongst the veterans who opposed Luther's teaching and innovations, were, in addition to those already mentioned, Michael Helding, auxiliary bishop and preacher at Mayence (later bishop of Merseburg), and Conrad Wimpina of Leipzig and Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, the author of a good Latin collection of works against Luther entitled " On the sects and errors," etc. (1528).[2] The Lutheran cause suffered considerably at the hands of these writers.

Thomas Murner, the famous Alsatian preacher and writer, a new Sebastian Brant even mightier than the former, entered the lists against Luther and made full use of the satirical style he had cultivated even earlier. Even Protestants have admitted his principal work against Luther (1522) to be a highly incisive and significant production, whilst a recent editor of his works describes him as the most weighty of Luther's literary opponents in Germany.[3]

[1] N. Paulus, " Schatzgeyer," 1898; " Hoffmeister," 1891; A. Postina, " Billick," 1901.

[2] J. Negwer, " Conrad Wimpina," Breslau, 1909 (in " KGl. Abh."

[3] Karl Goedeke, Introd. to his edition of Murner's " Narrenbeschwörung," Leipzig, 1879. Janssen, " Hist. of the German People " (Engl. Trans.), 11, p. 333.

There is certainly no question of his "wanton, cheerful, nay, bacchantic humour," and of his wealth of caustic irony; he enters into Luther's arguments and proofs, and refutes them, more particularly those taken from the Bible. Murner speaks a very simple and pithy language, though not loath to have recourse occasionally to coarse words, of which an example has been given above (p. 376). Luther paid him out by "amusing his readers with an account of the lice on Murner's cowl, and by circulating a lampoon alleged to have been sent him from the Rhine, but, at any rate, printed at Luther's own instance."[1]

Not one of those who took the field against Luther and pitted their strength against his was really a match for him in energy, in ability to handle the language, in wealth of fancy or in power over the people. To every clear-sighted observer it must have been apparent that truth and logic were on the side of the Catholic controversialists, but, unfortunately, not one of them was able to rival in effectiveness the writings of the Wittenberg Professor.

Here and there, in certain ruder passages, we can easily see how his opponents are clumsily endeavouring to retort upon their readier and more inventive foe in language almost identical with his own. Luther, however, stands alone in the originality of his abuse. But if his adversaries, as was too often the case, overstepped the bounds of moderation of language, we must bear in mind their pain and indignation at the unspeakable injustice done to the Church of their fathers. In those rude encounters people were only too apt to forget that, according to Christ's command, charity must be displayed even towards those who err. Yet the Church had received as part of her heirloom the injunction set by her Founder against the practice of the Jewish synagogue and its saying, "Hate thy enemy" (Mt. v. 42). "But I say to you: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."

It was on principles such as these that, for all his glowing zeal for the glory of God, Bl. Pierre Favre (Faber) acted, that gentle and enlightened preacher of the true Catholic reformation, who, since 1540, had been labouring in the

[1] Goedeke, *ibid.*

dioceses of Spires, of Mayence and of Cologne. It was on these principles that he formed his gifted pupil Bl. Peter Canisius, the first German Jesuit, who completed the Exercises under him at Mayence, and, three years before Luther's death, on May 8, 1543, joined the Society which had now been approved by the Church. Of the followers of the the new religion, Favre expresses himself as follows: "May Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all men, Who knows that His written Word does not suffice to touch the human mind, soften and move their hearts by His divine Grace." "No other arguments promote their conversion better than good works and self-sacrifice, even to laying down one's life."[1] "I never cease grieving," so he wrote to Ignatius, the General of the Order, "at the fall of the noble German nation, once the incomparable pearl of the Church and the glory of Christendom." Through the head of the Society he sought to convince its members that his own way of dealing with the apostasy was the best. "Those who wish to be of service to the false teachers of to-day," he writes, "must above all be distinguished by charity and real esteem for their opponents, and banish from their minds every thought that might in any way lessen their regard for them."[2]

When Pierre Favre set about his work for the preservation of the German Church, Luther was already at the heyday of his success. Favre accompanied the Spanish ambassador Ortiz to the religious Conference at Worms in 1540, and to the Diet of Ratisbon in 1541. Those two years bore convincing witness to the fact, that the progress of the innovations could no longer be checked by the authority either of Church or State.

But, before proceeding to examine Luther's work at its zenith, we must scrutinise his doctrine a little more closely.

[1] "Memoriale B. Petri Faber," ed. Marc. Bouix, Paris, 1873, pp. 378, 370

[2] Dan. Bartoli, "Opere," 5, Torino, 1825, pp. 110, 116. Cp. B. Duhr, "Gesch. der Jesuiten," etc., 1, 1907, 3 ff. Not all the members of the Order to which Favre and Canisius belonged were faithful to Favre's principles in the controversy against Luther and his teaching, particularly during the excited polemics of the 17th century. Many, at their own costs, disregarded those laws of urbanity which Bellarmine, for instance, ever respected in his controversial writings. Such was the case, for instance, with Conrad Vetter, † 1622 (K. A. J. Andreæ).

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE NEW DOGMAS IN AN HISTORICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL LIGHT

1. The Bible text and the Spirit as the "True Tests of Doctrine"

LUTHER'S theological opinions present an attractive field to the psychologist desirous of studying his character. They are in great part, as has been several times shown, the result of his experiences, inward or outward, and appear peculiarly suited to meet his own case. Hence an examination of his doctrines will be of great value, particularly towards an understanding of his inner history.

The specifically Lutheran doctrine of the Bible as sole judge in matters of faith, i.e. the old, so-called "formal principle" of Protestantism, deserves to be considered first, though, in point of time, it was not the first to be reached by Luther. Actually it was first broached by the author of the schism only when the opposition between his newly discovered views and the Church's teaching determined him to set aside both her claim to act as judge, and all other outward authority on doctrine. Refusing to be bound by the Church, in place of the teaching office with its gift of infallibility, which, according to the belief of the ancient Church, guards the treasure of revelation and therefore also decides on the sense of Holy Scripture, Luther set up as supreme arbiter the letter of the Bible. From this source, so he teaches, the faithful draw the doctrines of the faith, each one according to his ability and enlightenment.

The interpretation of the Sacred Books, in his view, takes place under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, and such an illumination he claimed first and foremost for himself. "Any believer who has better grounds and authority from Scripture on his side, is more to be believed than the Pope or a whole Council."[1]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 404; "Opp. lat. var.," 3, p. 247. He refers to Panormitanus, "De elect.," c. Significasti.

Liberty for the Examination of Scripture and Luther's Autonomy.

Luther only gradually reached his teaching concerning the supremacy of Holy Scripture.

His examination at Augsburg drew forth from him his first statements on this subject. In the postscript to his own report of the interview he places Holy Scripture first amongst the theological sources, adding that it was merely being corrupted by the so-called sacred Decrees of the Church ;[1] in his appeal to the Council he also places the Bible and its decision (i.e. his interpretation) above the Pope. Even then, however, he admitted the authority of the Council side by side with that of the Bible only in so far as he confidently looked to the Council for a decision in his favour. The fact that about this time he fancied he could descry Antichrist in the Pope reveals at once the wide gulf he was about to create between all ecclesiastical authority and Scripture privately interpreted.—Without having as yet formally proclaimed the new principle on Holy Scripture, he nevertheless declared at the Leipzig Disputation, that Scripture ranked above a Council,[2] and that Œcumenical Councils had already erred in matters of faith. Only when driven into a corner by his defence of the heresy of Hus, and after fruitless evasions, were these admissions wrung from him by Eck. Any light thus thrown on the matter by the Catholic speaker was, however, at once obscured by the following ambiguous clause added by Luther : " Councils have erred, and may err, particularly on points which do not appertain to faith."[3]

Immediately after the Leipzig Disputation, in a letter addressed by himself and Carlstadt to the Elector, Luther lays it down that " a layman with the Scripture on his side is more to be believed in than the Pope and a Council without Scripture.[4] Then, in the "*Resolutiones super propositionibus Lipsiæ disputatis*," he gives utterance to an assertion behind which he seeks to shelter his views : " Faith does not originate in authority

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 18 ff. ; " Opp. lat. var.," 2, p. 385 *seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 288=p. 75.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 303=p. 97 *seq.* : " *Concilium aliquando errasse, præsertim in iis quæ non sunt fidei.*" Cp. the following : " *conciliorum statuta in iis quæ sunt fidei, sunt omnimodo amplectenda.*"

[4] Letter of Aug. 18, 1519, " Briefe," 1, p. 315 ; " Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 19 (" Briefwechsel," 2, p. 12). At Worms in 1521 he had declared in this same sense, that he would not submit, " *nisi convictus fuero testimoniis scripturarum aut ratione evidente ; nam neque papæ neque conciliis solis credo, cum constet eos et errasse sæpius et sibi ipsis contradixisse ; victus sum scripturis a me adductis et capta conscientia in verbis Dei.*" " Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 883 ; cp. p. 853.—He writes emphatically in reply to King Henry VIII (see p. 391) : " *Ego vero adversus dicta patrum, hominum, angelorum, dæmonum pono non antiquum usum, non multitudinem hominum, sed unius maiestatis æternæ verbum, evangelium. . . . Dei verbum est super omnia.*" " Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 214 f. ; " Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 437.

but is produced in the heart only by the Holy Ghost, though man is indeed moved to faith by word and example."[1]

Yet, as though he himself wished to demonstrate the perils his new principle involved, not merely for the interpretation of the Bible but even for the integrity of the Sacred Books, he makes in the very same writing, on ostensibly intrinsic grounds, his famous onslaught on the Epistle of St. James which had been urged against him. Because this canonical Epistle tells against his doctrine of Justification, he will have it that, " its style is far beneath the dignity of an Apostle and is not to be compared with that of Paul."[2] Already at the Leipzig Disputation he had attacked the second Book of the Machabees, which did not suit his views, again for intrinsic reasons and because it ran counter to true doctrine ; the Church had indeed admitted it into the Canon, but " she could not raise the status of a book nor impart to it a higher value than it actually possessed."[3]

From that time forward Luther gives the most varied expression to the principle of the free interpretation of Scripture : He declares, that the Bible may be interpreted by everyone, even by the " humble miller's maid, nay, by a child of nine if it has the faith."[4] " The sheep must judge whether the pastors teach in Christ's own tone."[5] " Christ alone, and none other than the Crucified, do we acknowledge as our Master. Paul will not have us believe him or an angel (Gal. i. 8, 12) unless Christ lives and speaks in him." He is at pains to inform " the senseless Sophists, the unlearned bishops, monks and priests, the Pope and all his Gomorrhas " that we were baptised, not in the name of any Father of the Church, " but in the name of Jesus Christ."[6]

" That a Christian assembly or congregation has the right and the power to judge of doctrine and to appoint and dismiss preachers " is the title of one of Luther's writings of 1523.[7] Later we meet the downright declaration : " Neither Church, nor Fathers, nor Apostles, nor angels are to be listened to except so far as they teach the pure Word of God (' *nisi afferant et doceant purum verbum Dei* ')."[8]

In his bias against his foes he does not pause to consider that the very point at issue is to discern what the " pure Word of God " is, for, where it exists, any opposition on the

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 429 ; " Opp. lat. var.," 3, p. 287.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 425=p. 278. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 324=p. 131.
[4] " Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 359 ; Erl. ed., 16^2, p. 446.
[5] *Ibid.*, 11, p. 409=22, p. 143.
[6] *Ibid.*, 8, p. 484 f.=28, p. 32.
[7] *Ibid.*, 11, p. 408 ff.=22, p. 141 ff.
[8] In his " Com. in Ep. ad. Galatas," 1, p. 104.

part of "Church, Fathers and Apostles" is surely inconceivable. It is merely an echo of his early mystic theories when, in a dreamy sort of way, he hints, that the pure Word manifests itself to each believer and reveals itself to the world without the intervention of any outward authority. It was clearly mere prejudice in his own favour which led him to be ruled by the one idea that the "pure Word of God" was to be found nowhere but in his own reading of the Bible.

How greatly he allowed himself to be deceived by such fancies is already apparent in Luther's earliest known statements on Scripture at the very beginning of the public controversy. His devotion to Biblical study from his youth, and the academic laurels he had won in this branch of learning, led him, consciously or not, to find in himself an embodiment of Holy Scripture. Only in this way can we explain his strange language concerning the Bible in his "Eyn Freiheyt dess Sermons" against Tetzel. Here, at the very commencement, instead of setting quietly about his task, which was to defend his new interpretation against the tradition, objected by his opponent, he sings a pæan in praise of the unassailable Divine Word. "All who blaspheme Scripture with their false glosses," he writes, "shall perish by their own sword, like Goliath (1 Kings xvii. 51). . . . Christ's doctrine is His Divine Word. Whence it is forbidden, not only to this blasphemer [Tetzel], but to any angel in heaven, to change one letter of it. For it is written: 'God does not deny what He has once said,' Job xiii. [xiv.], and in the Psalter [cxviii. 89]: 'For ever, O Lord, Thy word standeth firm.' Not a jot or tittle of the most insignificant letter of the law of God shall pass; everything must be fulfilled."[1] Here Tetzel becomes a rude ass, "who brays at Luther," reminding the latter of a "sow" that defiles the venerable Scripture.[2]

How uncalled for his emphatic words quoted above on the value of the Bible really were can be more readily perceived now from a distance; for his opponents' esteem and that of the Church generally for the Word of God was certainly not behind his, whilst the Church provided a safeguard for Holy Scripture which Luther was unwilling

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 383 f.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 11.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 385=13.

to admit. But in those days, in the midst of the struggle, such praises showered by Luther on Holy Writ served to make people think—not at all to his disadvantage—that he was the herald and champion of the Bible, which the Popish Church did not reckon at its true worth, whereas, all the while, he should have been striving to show that his contentions really had the support of Scripture. Even later his misleading cry was ever: Back to the sacred stronghold of the Bible! Back to the "true, pure and undefiled Word of God!"

"Thy Word is the Truth" was his habitual battle-shout, though about this there had never been the least dispute.

"Against all the sayings of the Fathers," he says in 1522 in his reply to King Henry VIII, "against all the arts and words of angels, men and devils I set the Scriptures and the Gospel. . . . Here I stand and here I defy them. . . . The Word of God I count above all else and the Divine Majesty supports me; hence I should not turn a hair were a thousand Augustines against me, and am certain that the true Church adheres with me to God's Word." "Here Harry of England must hold his tongue." Harry would see how Luther "stood upon his rock" and that he, Harry, "twaddled" like a "silly fool."[1]

Experience given by the Spirit.

The "rock" on which Luther's interpretation of the Bible rests is a certain inward feeling and perception by the individual of the Bible's teaching.

In the last resort it is on an inward experience of having been taught by the Spirit the truth and meaning of the Divine words that the Christian must firmly take his stand. Just as Luther believed himself to have passed through such an experience, so, according to him, all others must first reach it and then make it their starting-point.

This is the Spirit from on High that co-operates with the Word of Scripture.

"Each man must believe solely because it is the Word of God and because he feels within that it is true, even though an angel from heaven and all the world should preach against it."[2] We must not regard the "opinion of all Christendom" but "each

[1] *Ibid.*, 10, 2, p. 256 f.=28, p. 379 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 90=340. "Von Menschen leren tzu meyden," 1522.

one for himself alone" must believe the Scriptures.[1] "The Word itself must content the heart and embrace and seize a man and, as it were, hold him captive till he feels how true and right it is."

"Hence every Christian can learn the truth from Scripture," so a present-day Protestant theologian describes Luther's then teaching;[2] "he is bound by no human school of interpretation, but the plain sense of Scripture and the experience of his heart suffice." He adds: "This might of course draw down upon Luther the charge of subjectivism." "What Luther said of the 'whisper' of the word of forgiveness is well known. Thus [according to Luther] God can, when necessary, work without the use of any means." Thanks to the "whisper" the Bible becomes a sure guide, "for [according to him] the Holy Ghost always works in the heart the selfsame truth." "From the peculiar religious standpoint of his own experience of salvation," Luther, so the same theologian admits, determined his "attitude towards Scripture." In this we have one of the results of his "personal experience."

"How it comes to pass," says Luther, "that Christ thus enters the heart you cannot tell; but your heart feels plainly, by the experience of faith, that He is there indeed."[3] "When the Holy Ghost performs His office then it proceeds."[4] "No one can rightly understand God or the Word of God unless he receives it directly from the Holy Ghost."

When his friend Carlstadt, together with whom Luther had at first insisted on Scripture only, later struck out a path of his own in doctrine and ecclesiastical practice while continuing to appeal to Scripture and to his own enlightenment, even the controversy with him and the "fanatics" failed to make Luther relinquish in theory his standpoint concerning the Bible and the Spirit as the one source and rule of faith. He became, however, more cautious in formulating it and endeavoured at least to leave a back door open. He was less insistent in his assertion that the Spirit instructed, by the inward Word, each one who read the

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 90=341. See below, Luther's denial of the Augustinian "*Non crederem evangelio*," etc.

[2] Otto Scheel, "Luthers Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift," Tübingen, 1902 ("Sammlung gemeinverständl. Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theol. und RG.," No. 29), p. 38 (on p. 37 the last quotation is also given with an incorrect reference) and p. 41 f.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 489; Erl. ed., 29, p. 334. "Sermon von dem Sacrament," 1526.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 565: "*Quod est eius opus? Quod* drive into the heart *prædicationem Christi, qui non* fails. Christ failed, *quia multis prædicaverit et nihil effecit; Spiritus sanctus* presses the word *in cor. . . . Si etiam* a hundred thousand *verbum prædicatur, nihil facit; cum Spiritus sanctus hoc suum officium facit, tum* it makes its way."

Scriptures; so much the more did he emphasise the supposed "clearness of the outward Word," viz. the Bible, and deprecate any wanton treatment of it (by anyone save himself); at the same time he began to lay stress on the outward side of the Church, on the preaching office and the administration of the Sacraments.[1] The fanatics he reproves for "merely gaping at the Spirit in their hearts," whereas the outward articles must necessarily precede this.[2] At times what he says almost looks like a repudiation of his earlier theory of enlightenment through the Spirit; for instance, when he describes how the fanatics wait "till the heavenly voice comes and God speaks to them."[3] Now, the outward Word of the Gospel, proclaimed by men truly "called," is to be the guiding star amidst the mischief wrought by the sectarians; this outward Word, so he now fancies, will surely avail to decide every issue, seeing that it is so clear; only by dint of juggling could the sense of the Bible, as manifest in the outward Word, be distorted; looked at fairly it at once settled every question—needless to say in Luther's favour; to understand it, all that was needed was the "natural language," the "Lady Empress who far excels all subtle inventions."[4]

As to the alleged clearness of the word of Scripture it is sufficient to recall that he himself indirectly challenged it by accusing the whole Church of having misunderstood the Bible, and to consider the abyss that separated his interpretation, even of the most vital texts, from that of the scholars of the past. "Though we had the Bible and read it," he says, "yet we understood nothing of it."[5]—Nevertheless he fancied he could save his theory by appealing to the clearness of the text and the assistance rendered by a knowledge of languages. "St. Paul wills" (1 Cor. xiv. 29), so Luther says, in a writing on the schools, "that Christians should judge all doctrine, though for this we must needs be acquainted with the language. For the preacher or teacher may indeed read the Bible through and through as much as he chooses, but he will sometimes be right and sometimes

[1] Cp. above, vol. iii., pp. 12 ff., 398.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 181; Erl. ed., 29, p. 260.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 137=209 ("Widder die hymelischen Propheten"): "Do you see how the devil, the enemy of divine order, opens his mouth at you with the words, 'spirit, spirit, spirit'?" etc.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 180=258. [5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 50, p. 85.

wrong, if there be no one there to judge whether he is doing it well or ill. Thus in order to judge there must be skill or a knowledge of tongues, otherwise it is all to no purpose."[1]

But above all, as he impresses on the reader in the same tract, he himself had thrown light on the Bible by his knowledge of languages; his interpretation, thanks to the "light" of the languages, had effected "such great things that all the world marvels and must confess that now we have the Gospel almost as pure and undefiled as the Apostles had it, that it is restored to its pristine purity, and is even more undefiled than at the time of St. Jerome or Augustine."[2] His willingness, expressed from time to time, to submit himself or any other teacher to the judgment of anyone possessed of greater learning and a more profound spiritual sense, attracted many enlightened minds to his party.[3]

Luther's self-contradiction in speaking, first, of the great clearness of the Bible, and then of its great obscurity, cannot fail to strike one.

[1] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 15, p. 42; Erl. ed., 22, p. 187. "An die Radherrn aller Stedte deutsches Lands, das sie christliche Schulen auffrichten und halten sollen," 1524.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 39=184.

[3] At the German Protestant Congress at Berlin in 1904, Dr. Max Fischer of Berlin appealed to the above writing of Luther's as a proof that the latter had relinquished his idea of the Bible being in the hands of each individual the sole source of doctrine. "That this, as a foundation of all doctrine, is impossible in Protestantism," he said, speaking from his standpoint, "has long been admitted, and we have simply to bear in mind how Protestant theology has come to examine freely, not only the contents of the Bible, but the Bible itself. Theology has no rights other than those enjoyed by any other branch of worldly learning." In the sequel the writer declared himself against the Divinity of Christ and any set system of doctrine. According to him particular doctrines, even those of the Apostles' Creed, were of no importance. "He has all the faith required who makes his faith for himself." (See the report of the discourse in the "Köln. Volksztng.," 1904, No. 834.) We may compare this principle with Luther's own on freedom. The same principles were recently invoked in the case of the Protestant Pastor Jatho of Cologne, when he was charged with being an unbeliever. On his dismissal from office his friends declared that "a chain had been riveted on free and unbiassed research in Prussian Protestantism, and that the official representatives of Protestantism had banned that spirit of personal Christianity which once had impelled Luther to nail up his Theses to the door of the Castle-church at Wittenberg." ("Köln. Ztng.," 1911, No. 712; cp. "Köln. Volksztng.," 1911, No. 545.) During the trial Jatho, too, had appealed to his "inward experience" and personal knowledge. ("Köln. Volksztng.," 1911, No. 592.)

" Whoever now wants to become a theologian," he says, for instance, " enjoys a great advantage. For, first, he has the Bible which is now so clear that he can read it without any difficulty." " Should anyone say that it is necessary to have the interpretation of the Fathers and that Scripture is obscure, you must reply, that that is untrue. There is no book on earth more plainly written than Holy Scripture ; in comparison with all other books it is as the sun to any other light."[1] Elsewhere he says : " The ungodly sophists [the Schoolmen] have asserted, that in Holy Scripture there is much that is obscure and not yet clearly explained," but according to him they were not able to bring forward one vestige of proof ; " if the words are obscure in one passage, they are clear in another," and a comparison makes everything plain, particularly to one who is learned in languages.[2] —Thus the Bible, according to a further statement, is " clearer, easier and more certain than any other writing."[3] " It is in itself quite certain, quite easy and quite plain ; it is its own explanation ; it is the universal argument, judge and enlightener, and makes all clear to all."[4]

Later, however, the idea that Holy Scripture was obscure preponderated with him. Two days before his death Luther wrote in Latin on a piece of paper, which was subsequently found on his table, his thoughts on the difficulty of understanding Scripture : " No one can understand the Bucolics of Virgil who has not been a herdsman for five years ; nor his Georgics unless he has laboured five years in the fields. In order to understand aright the epistles of Cicero a man must have been full twenty years in the public service of a great State. No one need fancy he has tasted Holy Scripture who has not ruled Churches for a hundred years with prophets like Elias and Eliseus, with John the Baptist, Christ and the Apostles."[5] In all likelihood his experiences with the sectarians in his own camp led him towards the end of his life to lay more stress on the difficulty of understanding the Bible.

Even with the " plain, arid Scripture " and a clear brain

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 236 ; Erl. ed., 39, p. 133.
[2] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 18, p. 606=" Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 124. " De servo arbitrio."
[3] *Ibid.*, 7, p. 317=24, p. 58.
[4] *Ibid.*, 7, p. 97=" Opp. lat. var," 5, p. 161.
[5] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 57, p. 16, Table-Talk.

it may easily happen, as he says, to a man to fall into danger through the Bible, by looking at it from "his own conceit," as "through a painted glass," and "seeing no other colour than that of the glass."[1] Such people cannot then be set right, but become "masters of heresy."[2] All heresy seems to him to come from Scripture and to be based on it. There is no heretic, he says in a sermon in 1528, who does not appeal to Scripture; hence it came about that people called the Bible a heresy-book.[3] The "heresy-book" was a favourite topic with him. Two years earlier he had used the expression twice on one day,[4] and in 1525, when complaining in a sermon that the fanatics decked themselves out with Scripture, he said: "Thus it is true what people say, viz. that Holy Scripture is a heresy-book, i.e. a book that the heretics claim for themselves; there is no other book that they misuse so much as this book, and there has never been a heresy so bad or so gross that it has not sheltered itself behind Scripture."[5] These preachers from among the fanatics, he says, boast of the voice of God and of the Spirit, but they were never sent; let them prove by miracles their Divine mission![6]

Thus he had retracted nothing of his strange doctrine concerning private enlightenment; on the contrary, when not actually dealing with the sectarians, he still declared with that persistence of which he was such a master and which shrank from no self-contradictions, that the Spirit alone taught man how to understand the Scriptures, now that man, owing to original sin, was quite unable to grasp even the plainest passages. "In it [the Bible] not one word is of so small account as to allow of our understanding it by reason."[7] Only by virtue of the higher light by which he understood Scripture could a man "impartially prove and judge the different spirits and their doctrines." This he wrote in his "*De servo arbitrio*" at a time when he had already engaged upon the struggle with the "Heavenly

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 75; Erl. ed., 30, p. 22.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Sermon of Aug. 2, 1528. "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 287.
[4] On Dec. 23, 1526, he said in his afternoon sermon, speaking of the sermon that morning: "*Hodie dixi, biblia esse hæresium librum*," "Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 624. And as a matter of fact the notes contain the passage, *ibid.*, 20, p. 588.
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 17, 1, p. 362. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 360.
[7] "Werke," Erl. ed., 15², p. 144.

Prophets."[1] And to these principles he remained faithful till death without, however, as a Protestant scholar repeatedly points out of the several sides of Luther's theology, "explaining more clearly" their relation to the difficulties involved.

Concerning the inward Word or the enlightenment by the Spirit some words of Luther's in 1531 may be given here.

In that year he preached on the Gospel of St. John. He dwelt at some length on his favourite passage: "Whoever believeth in Me hath everlasting life," and its context. Here, speaking repeatedly of the outward and the inward Word, he insists especially on the former and particularly on the hearing of sermons with faith, though so far was he from relinquishing the inward Word that he combines it in a strange way with the outward, and finally arrives once more at his earlier pet idea: Whoever is taught inwardly by the Spirit is free to judge and decide on all things.

"The Lord Christ intends," so he explains, "that we should hold fast and remain by the outward, spoken Word, and thereby He has put down reason from its seat," i.e. has repudiated the objections of the fanatics who differed from him. Christ, according to Luther, exhorts us "diligently to listen to and learn the Word."[2] The beginning of Justification is in this, that "God proclaims to you the spoken, outward Word."[3] To this end God has His messengers and vicars. "When you hear a sermon from St. Paul or from me, you hear God the Father Himself; yet both of us, you and I, have one schoolmaster and doctor, viz. the Father . . . only that God speaks to you through me."[4] Here he does not enter into the question of his mission, though he shows plainly enough that he was not going to be set aside. "God must give the spoken Word," "otherwise it does not make its way. But if you are set on helping yourselves, why then should I preach? In that case you have no need of me. . . . We

[1] "With reference to this Luther declares ('*De servo arbitrio*'): In the words of Scripture which lie open to us and all the world, no one, owing to the darkening of the mind, is able to discern the smallest iota so long as he has not the Spirit of God; no one possesses the inner sense or the true knowledge requisite—'*nihil horum sentiunt aut vere cognoscunt*'—no one believes that God exists and that he is His creature. For him the '*iudicium interius*,' in the Christian who has attained to the true light and his salvation through the Spirit of God, consists in being able to test with certainty all doctrines and beliefs (1 Cor. ii. 15). This individual judgment is essential for every Christian and for his faith; it does not, however, profit others: For them the '*exterius iudicium*' is intended, which is exercised by the preacher of the Word." Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 1^2, p. 380.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 33, p. 145; Erl. ed., 47, p. 353. From Notes of the Sermon published in 1564.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 161=367; cp. p. 165=371.

[4] P. 148=356.

may be angered and stupefied over it" (viz. at the apparent divergence between the Word of God and reason), yet we must listen and weigh "the Word that is preached by the lips of Christ."[1]

Excellent as this exhortation may be so far as St. Paul was concerned, the speaker is at no pains to supply his hearer with any proof of his own saying, viz. "that God speaks to you through me." He insists upon it, however, and now comes the intervention of the Spirit: God must "inspire the conviction that it is His Word"[2] which has been heard. "Without the Word we must not do anything, but must be taught by God."[3] "When the heart can feel assured that God the Father Himself is speaking to us [when we listen to a sermon], then the Holy Ghost and the light enters in; then man is enlightened and becomes a happy master, and is able to decide and judge of all doctrine, for he has the light, and faith in the Divine Word, and feels certain within his breast that his doctrine is the very Word of God."[4] When you "feel this in your heart, then account yourself one of the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will allow Him to be Master and surrender yourself to Him. In this way will you be saved."[5]

The real breathing of the Spirit of God, however, confirms the utterances only of the "preaching office," viz. Luther's and the Lutherans'. This he proclaims in the following words: "The true breathing and inspiration of the Holy Ghost is that which is wafted through the preaching office and the outward Word."[6]

In what follows, for the better understanding of Luther's attitude towards the Bible, we shall examine two consequences of his subjective ways, viz. their effect on the inspiration and the Canon of Scripture, and the exegetical disagreement which was the result of the principle of inward experience, also the means he chose to remedy it.

Inspiration and the Canon of Scripture.

In the matter of the inspiration of Scripture Luther never went so far as the fanatical enthusiasts of later Lutheranism, who, in their systems, taught an actual verbal inspiration, according to which the writers of the Bible had not merely been impelled, enlightened, and infallibly preserved from error, but had received every word from God. On the contrary, owing to his wanton handling of the Bible, he takes the inspiration of its writers so widely and vaguely that the very idea of inspiration is practically

[1] P. 152=360. [2] P. 150=358. [3] P. 152=359.
[4] P. 146=354. [5] P. 148=356.
[6] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 5², p. 251, Hauspostille. Sermon of 1533.

evaporated. The Bible is indeed, according to him, an outcome of the inspiration of God and is the writing and Word of the Holy Ghost ("*Spiritus auctor est libri*"),[1] and may accordingly be described as "the Holy Ghost's own especial book, writing and Word"—which he sometimes explains almost as though he had been a believer in verbal inspiration.[2]

The fact is, however, that he sees "in the sacred writers no other form of spiritual illumination than that displayed in the verbal preaching of the Divine witnesses."[3] "Moreover we occasionally find him questioning whether in certain passages the Holy Ghost . . . is really so unquestionably present as in other parts of Scripture." The truth is "he never formulated any detailed theory of Scriptural inspiration. With Luther the action of the Holy Ghost, on the witnesses of both Old Testament and New, is always one and the same, whether they proclaim the Word verbally or by writing; nowhere do we meet with the thought that they were under the influence of any other inspiration when they wrote."[4]

The freedom he allowed himself, no less in the matter of inspiration than in the principle of the Bible only, explains the distinction he so often makes between the character and importance of the various parts of the "Word of God," which he will have one keep in view when searching in Scripture for the truths of faith. In passages where religion is not concerned, particularly in historical statements, he believes that the tools of the Holy Ghost both could and did err.[5] He thinks that "the predictions of the prophets concerning the Kings and secular affairs often turned out wrong."[6] The inspiration of the Apostles (and Evangelists) in the New-Testament writings was merely a part of their general "office," not a "special inspiration" in the nature

[1] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 7, p. 313, "Enarr. in Genes."

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 415, in the Preface to the second part of the first complete edition of his works (compiled from his writings).

[3] Köstlin, *ibid.*, 2^2, p. 36.

[4] Köstlin, *ibid.*, and p. 15, 30.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[6] Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 8^2, p. 23 f., where Luther says, the predictions of the prophets (or of the Apocalypse) concerning wars, the Kings, etc., were "things pleasing to the inquisitive . . . but were unnecessary prophecies, for they neither taught nor furthered the Christian faith"; in those prophecies "concerning Kings and worldly events" the Prophets had "often been wrong."

of a " second power added to and independent of it." " The predominant importance of the Apostles he traces back to their general inspiration in the sense described above."[1]

Catholic doctors before Luther's day had showed themselves far more jealous of the sacredness of the Bible, as regards both the idea of inspiration and the equal value of all the books, and their every part. In spite of this Luther would have it that he had been the first to make the Bible respected.

One point deserving of consideration as an instance of Luther's wantonness is his attitude towards the Canon of the Sacred Books.

How was he to prove that this or that book was to be included amongst the writings which constituted the Word of God, now that he had rejected the testimony of ecclesiastical tradition ? According to the teaching of the ancient Church, it was tradition and the authority of the Church which vouched for the canonical character of the books of the Bible. Luther was confronted with this objection by Johann Eck at the Leipzig Disputation, who quoted the well-known words of St. Augustine, that he was compelled " to believe the Gospel only on the authority of the Catholic Church."[2] No longer recognising the authority of the Church, Luther met the objection by some strange evasions.[3] When at last he saw that no other meaning could be read into the passage he threw it overboard and wrote : " If this meaning be not in St. Augustine's words then it were better to repudiate his saying. For it is contrary to Scripture, to the Spirit and to all experience."[4] Even for the inspired value of the books included in the Canon he appealed in his arbitrary fashion, not to the infallible Church, but to the " inward testimony of the Spirit."

He could hardly escape being thus thrown back on this inward, mystical attestation, seeing that, according to him, human reason is of little assistance in the matter. Here the " inner sense " has to come in and, just as under the

[1] Thus O. Scheel (above, p. 392, n. 2), p. 67 f.

[2] " *Ego vero evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicæ ecclesiæ commoveret auctoritas . . . qua infirmata iam nec evangelio credere potero.*" " Contra epistolam fundamenti Manichæorum," c. 5.

[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 2, pp. 429–432 ; " Opp. lat. var.," 3, pp. 284–288. " Resol. super propos. Lipsienses."

[4] " Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 90 ; Erl. ed., 28, p. 341.

illumination of the Spirit of God, it imparts certainty concerning the meaning of the Bible, so also it discerns the dignity and godly value of Scripture. For obvious reasons, here again, he fails to favour us with any "clearer explanation" of his theory. One thing, however, emerges clearly, viz. that the feeling of certainty regarding both the meaning and the contents is practically identical with the feeling that the writing in question is Divine; since the Spirit from on High teaches me the truth which lies in the sense of Scripture, so also it must teach me that it is Scripture; the apprehension of the sense and of the Divine character of the sacred pages is one and the same.[1]

It is thus that Luther clothes in intangible, mystical language the vital question of religion here involved; at the Leipzig Disputation he had used terms no less elusive: Every book that really belongs to the Canon has authority and certainty "*per se ipsum.*"[2] His mystical words were the outcome of deep-seated tendencies within him; Tauler's language, which Luther had so skilfully made his own, was to assist him in concealing the obscurity and lack of logic inherent in his views.

In reality, nevertheless, like the Catholics, he accepted the Canon of Holy Scripture as handed down by antiquity; only that he granted to the subjective influence of the "testimony of the Spirit" a far-reaching and destructive force. He arbitrarily struck out of the Canon quite a number of authentic writings,[3] which will be enumerated elsewhere[4] together with his statements concerning them.

[1] According to Köstlin ("Luthers Theol.," 2^2, p. 10 ff., it was only the orthodox Lutherans after his day who developed this into the doctrine of the "*testimonium Spiritus Sancti*," which assures every reader of the canonicity of the books of the Bible. In reality, however, Luther himself already stood for this "*testimonium.*" Thanks to it he judged of the relative importance of the Sacred Books and only "allowed himself to be determined by the spirit speaking to him out of them." Thus Köstlin himself, 1^2, p. 319.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 325; "Opp. lat. var.," 3, p. 131: "*Non potest ecclesia plus tribuere auctoritatis aut firmitatis libro, quam per se ipsum habeat.*" The question, however, was who was to attest this authority.

[3] See our vol. v., xxxiv., 3.

[4] O. Scheel (above, p. 392, n. 2), p. 47, after having instanced Luther's adverse criticism of the Epistle of St. James and the prophetical books, remarks: "He took exception to the Epistle of Jude, to Hebrews and to the Apocalypse. The Book of Esther deserved no place in the Canon any more than the second Book of Machabees, though the first was worthy of canonisation. [It was, as Luther says

His literary opponents had a right to represent to him that so "strange and arbitrary"[1] a proceeding was merely a result of his theory that the sacred books must prove their

in the Preface to his German translation of it (Erl. ed., 63, p. 104), 'not unworthy of being included amongst the sacred writings of the Hebrews,' because in the history of Antiochus it gives us a picture of the fall of the real Antichrist, viz. Popery !] Luther makes a distinction even between the books he does not impugn. Of the Pauline writings he gives the first place to Romans, just as he places St. John's first among the Gospels. He esteems the synoptics less highly because they record the works and deeds of Christ and not the message of righteousness by grace." Scheel notes (p. 49 f.), that Luther's criticism was based, not on learned historical arguments, but on the "religious stimulus" these writings supplied, viz. on the extent to which they might prove of service to his doctrine, i.e. on "inward considerations." "The fact that the Epistle of James says nothing of Christ and Justification by grace was ground enough for Luther to reject it. Analogous is the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews. . . . From all this it is evident how much Luther placed religious criticism in the foreground and what secondary importance he attached to historical criticism." He cares little whether a writing is apostolic or not; what he wants to know is whether its contents agree with what he has perceived to be the kernel of Scripture. "He did not even shrink from impugning the authority of the Apostles in favour of a higher standard" (p. 52). Scheel then deals with the statements more favourable to Luther made by J. Kunze ("Glaubensregel, heil. Schrift und Taufbekenntnis," Leipzig, 1899, pp. 509, 521) and H. Preuss ("Die Entwicklung des Schriftprinzips bei Luther bis zur Leipziger Disputation," Leipzig, 1901, p. 99). "With Luther's independent criticism of Scripture," he says (p. 64 f.), "the assumption of the inspiration of Scripture hardly agrees. . . . Kunze also denies that the effect of the mediæval doctrine of inspiration appears at all in Luther; the belief that the Apostles spoke by the Holy Ghost should not be identified with the doctrine of inspiration in its concrete and historical shape." True enough Kunze admits (p. 504, n. 1) "some after-effects" of that doctrine upon Luther, but the question is "how such after-effects were compatible with the uniform theory of Scripture," which he finds in Luther. On the consistency of Luther's theory, see Scheel's remarks below, p. 407.—Adolf Harnack repeatedly declares, that Luther's attitude towards the Bible was characterised by "flagrant contradictions" ("Dogmengesch.," 3^4, pp. 868, 878; cp. pp. 771 f., 791 f.), because his criticism "demolished the external authority of the written Word."—Of Luther's treatment of the Apocalypse, G. Arnold, the spokesman and historian of the Pietists, complains in his Church History (Frankfurt edition, vol. ii., 1699, p. 39); he said of it "very much what all the fanatics said, viz. that each one might believe concerning it what his Spirit inspired him with; his [Luther's] Spirit could not agree with the book, and the fact that Christ was neither taught nor recognised in it was sufficient for him not to esteem it highly." Arnold also complains that, in the Preface to the Apocalypse ("now usually omitted"), Luther says, "that it was too bad of John to command and threaten about this book," etc.; the book, according to Luther, was neither apostolic nor prophetical, indeed not by the Holy Ghost at all, seeing that it did not treat of faith or Christian doctrine but merely of history.

[1] Köstlin, *ibid.*, 2^2, p. 29.

character and value to each man individually. At any rate, his attitude towards the Bible cannot be regarded as at all logical.[1]

Inward Assurance and Disagreements Without.

The second consequence of Luther's biblical subjectivism which we have to consider lies outside him. It is the disconcerting divergence in interpretation which was the immediate result of his doctrine of "inward experience," to correct which he had recourse to some curious remedies.

First of all we may append some further quotations from his writings to those already adduced. The significance of this remarkable side of the psychology of his doctrine is often not fully appreciated, because it seems scarcely believable that Luther should have ventured so far into the airy region of idealism. And yet, on the other hand, we have here the principal reason for describing the new doctrine as something interior, and as one doing better justice to our feelings and personality, which was Luther's own claim and, after him, that of Protestants generally. The difficulty, however, is that almost every sentence of Luther's regarding the part played by "inward assurance" in respect of the Bible, raises the question how that oneness of interpretation which he ever presupposes, is to escape shipwreck, even in the case of essential doctrines.

As early as Jan. 18, 1518, in his advice to Spalatin on the reading of Scripture, Luther had appealed to the mystic "influence," telling him to distrust himself and to rely solely on the "*influxus Spiritus*"; this appeal he supports on his own inward experience.[2] In this case his experience, however, mainly concerned the confirmation of his chief doctrine; for it was under an inspiration from on High that he had begun to feel his way to the new Evangel of Justification (see vol. iii., p. 110 ff.). But what was to be done when others, too, laid claim to a similar experience and inspiration?

At a later date he described to his friends how he had learnt to understand Scripture "*in maximis agonibus et tentationibus*"; it was thus he had found in the Bible the Divinity of Christ and the articles on the Trinity; even now he was more certain of

[1] F. Loofs ("Dogmengesch.,"[4] p. 747) says that Luther reintroduced the Catholic ideas he had "vanquished," and made this "burden in Protestantism heavier than it had ever been before." Cp. above, p. 398 f.

[2] Jan. 18, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 142.

these truths by experience than by faith.[1] Even the absolute predestination of the damned to hell, the entire absence of free-will for doing what is good and other extravagant opinions questioned even by his own followers, he declares he had learned directly from the Bible. In 1534 he places Scripture side by side with inward experience (or the Spirit), as the warrant—even in the case of others—for all knowledge of things Divine.

This he likewise applies to the Apostles' Creed.[2] In 1537 he said in a sermon at Schmalkalden, "not only did all this [what is professed in the Creed] take place as we read in the Word of the Gospel, but the Holy Ghost also writes it inwardly in our heart."[3] He accepts the teaching of the Apostles' Creed because he has convinced himself that it is based on Holy Writ.[4] But how if others are not thus convinced? Were they too to be fastened to the dogma?

R. Seeberg gives a good account of Luther's views on the character of the dogmas of the ancient Church.[5] "He treats the symbols of the ancient Church with great respect, particularly the Apostles' Creed which contains all the chief articles of faith.[6] But this does not mean that he believes in each creed or Council as such." "In his work 'Von den Conciliis' with masterly historical criticism [?] he denies all binding authority even to the ancient Councils"; even the Council of the Apostles passed resolutions which were afterwards rescinded, and so did the Nicene Council. "Dogma is true," so runs Luther's teaching as given by Seeberg, "only so far as it agrees with Scripture; in itself it is of no authority. But the truth of Scripture is one that

[1] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 52.

[2] In this remarkable passage of his exposition of 1 Cor. xv. (1534, "Werke," Erl. ed., 51, pp. 102–104), he exhorts all to "hold fast to the doctrine and preaching for which we have both sure Scripture and also inward experience. These should be the two witnesses and the two test-stones of true doctrine." He here inveighs against the fanatics because they taught, "what not one of them had experienced," "an uncertain delusion of which not one of them had had any experience." "None of the fanatics are able to prove their contention either by their own experience or by that of others." Of himself, however, he could say: "I have experienced it; for I too was once a pious monk," etc.; then follows the legend of his life in the monastery and of how, before his discovery of the sense of the text on which his new teaching rested, he had never known what it was to have a "gracious God." "Hence, whoever wishes not to err, let him look to these two points, whether he is able to bear witness to his doctrine out of Scripture and a sure inward experience, as we can to our doctrine and preaching."

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 23, p. 250. "An Exposition of the Christian Faith," 1537. Before this: "This is to have the Holy Ghost, when we experience in our hearts the Creation and Redemption." "The Pope and his people do not feel this in their hearts."

[4] "All the articles which he believed he had repeatedly drawn from Scripture." "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 500; Erl. ed., 30, p. 363. "Vom Abendmal Christi Bekentnis," 1528.

[5] "Lehrb. der DG.," part 2, Erlangen, 1898, p. 289 f.

[6] Seeberg refers to "Werke," Erl. ed., 28, pp. 413 f., 346 f.; 9^1, p. 29 ff.; 13^1, p. 221 f.; 20^1, p. 297 f.

is attested interiorly. Hence we can say that the Holy Ghost produces in us the assurance of the true doctrine [of the Apostles' Creed]."[1]—The page-heading where these words occur runs: "Luther's independence of dogma."

A highly important statement on the interior instruction that goes on when we read Scripture is contained in Luther's quite early work "*De Captivitate Babylonica*" (1520): The soul, he says there, referring to a misunderstood passage of St. Augustine's on a well-known fact in the natural order, is so affected by the truth, that, thanks to it, it is able to judge rightly and surely of all things; it is forced to confess with unfailing certitude that this is the truth, just as reason affirms with unfailing certitude that three and seven make ten; the same is the case with all real Christians and their spiritual sense which, according to 1 Cor. ii. 15, judges all things and is judged of no man.[2]—The last words of the Apostle refer, however, to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, bestowed for a while by God on some few Christians in the early days of the Church, and cannot apply to the ordinary conditions of later times.

Luther simply ignores the objection, that, if every man is judge, unutterable discord must ensue. The way in which he contrived so long to conceal this from himself is psychologically remarkable. For instance, in one of the principal passages where this objection should have been faced, viz. in his work against King Henry VIII, he glosses over the difficulty with the assertion that, even under the Pope, there was also no unity of doctrine; he then consoles himself with the words of Christ (John vi.), that all true Christians "shall be taught of God" and that every one that hath heard the Father cometh to the Saviour; the Spirit of God makes all to be one and effects an "*idem docere, idem confiteri, idem sequi.*"—We can only wonder at the idealism that could expect such results in a world inhabited by human beings.—In the end, however, since this was scarcely to be looked for, "external unity would be sufficiently safeguarded by the one Baptism and one Supper," whereby all "testify to the oneness of their faith and spirit."[3] At any rate, he is confident that the true explanation (viz. his own) of the truths of salvation will gain the upper hand. For the Church cannot perish.

In point of fact Luther really fancies himself justified in appealing to this entirely new meaning put by him on the promise to the Church that she shall never perish; she is indestructible because true believers will always be there to maintain Luther's interpretation of revelation and of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and because any general falling away from the truth is

[1] Reference to "Werke," Erl. ed., 23, pp. 249, 267; 20^1, p. 148.

[2] Weim. ed., 6, p. 561; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 102. Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 1^2, p. 302.

[3] *Ibid.*, 10, 2, p. 219=6, p. 444: "*Hic dicent: Si singulorum est ius iudicandi et probandi, quis erit modus, si iudices dissenserint et unusquisque secundum suum caput iudicarit?*" etc.

not to be thought of. Even though very many, indeed the greater number, deny the true Scripture teaching, still, many others remain, as, of yore, the seven thousand when Israel fell away from God. According to him even these may he held captive all their life in some error concerning the faith and reach the right road and faith in the grace of Christ only on their death-bed, according to the promise in John x. 28.[1] In view of the darkness prevalent in former ages this appears to him to suffice in order to enable us to say that the Church has not really perished,[2] and to save the cause of private enlightenment on the Bible. For this must stand fast, viz. that the Spirit of God most surely bears witness to the contents of the Divine Word in the hearts of the hearers and readers. "Luther," says a Protestant exponent of his theology, "laid this down time after time." "His statements on this subject cannot fail, however, to raise certain questions in our minds."[3]

They gave rise to questions in his own day, and to something more than mere questions. The bitter theological dissensions already hinted at were the result. The inevitable divergency in the interpretation of the Bible was seen everywhere, and a hundred different opinions, some based on the inward assurance given by the "Spirit of God," some on the reflections of reason, took the field. We know to what an extent Luther had to suffer from the discord born of his principle, not merely from such comparatively unimportant persons as Jacob Schenk[4] and his "disgracefully arrogant" colleague, Johann Agricola, not merely from the fanatics and Anabaptists who found in the Bible a different teaching on Baptism, divine worship and morality, or from the Zwinglians with their divergent biblical interpretation of the Eucharist, but even, so to speak, in his own family, from Melanchthon, who was rash enough to incline to the Swiss reformed doctrines and to fight shy of the stricter Lutheranism. "The presumption," Luther declares, strangely enough, "is really unbearable, that people should rise up against the authority of the Church," despise the teaching of the best and ablest, and only worship their own views in Holy Scripture. "The name of the Church should be held in high honour."[5] He forbore, however, to specify which Church he meant, and moreover he had set himself above every Church. "All other forms of arrogance," he declares, "can be endured and allow of improvement, as in the healing art, in philosophy, in poetry, in mechanics and in the case of the young. . . . But that shocking '*arrogantia theologiæ*' is the source of all evil, and a consuming fire."[6]

So little did he succeed in repressing "theological arrogance," but rather, by his action, threw open the doors to it, that in

[1] *Ibid.*, 18, p. 649 f. = 7, p. 171. "De servo arbitrio." Köstlin, *ibid.*, 1^2, p. 381.

[2] Hence his confession: "*Credo ecclesiam sanctam catholicam, ut impossibile sit, illam errare etiam in minimo articulo.*" "Werke," *ibid.*

[3] Köstlin, *ibid.*, 2^2, p. 39.

[4] Above, vol. iii., p. 401.

[5] Vol. iii., p. 400.

[6] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 193.

1525 he was forced to lament:[1] "There are as many sects and beliefs as there are heads. This fellow will have nothing to do with baptism, another denies the Sacrament, a third believes that there is another world between this and the Last Day. Some teach that Christ is not God, some say this, some that. . . . There is now no rustic so rude but that, if he dreams or fancies anything, it must be the whisper of the Holy Ghost and he himself a prophet. . . . There is no one who does not wish to be cleverer than Luther; they all want to try their steel on me. . . . They speak like madmen; I have during the year to listen to many such wretched folk. In no other way can the devil come so close to me, that I must admit. Formerly the world was full of noisy, disembodied spirits giving themselves out to be the souls of men; now it is full of uproarious spirits with bodies, who all declare that they are real angels."[2]

He has this crumb of comfort: The world is the devil's playground; and uproars there must be.[3]

"This is all due," he says finally, truly and aptly, "to their bringing their conceit with them to the study of Scripture, which has to submit to being judged, moulded and led by their head and reason,"[4]—surely a bitter punishment for throwing over the divinely appointed authority of the Church, which decides on the sense of the Bible.

"By thus making individual experience the test," remarks a Protestant theologian, "the door seemed opened wide to never-ending dissension. . . . Luther did not succeed in carrying his theory to its right conclusion. Indeed we even find him formulating thoughts which seem to tend back to the old, mechanical authority of Scripture." According to this writer, Luther's conception of Scripture presented certain "imperfections" which, "even in principle, were practically at variance with it; these, however, disappeared as the fanatic movement taught Luther their disastrous effects." The same writer asks finally: "But was it really a question merely of 'imperfections' which did not endanger the very essence of his views?"[5]

"What did Luther set up, instead of tradition, as a principle of interpretation?" another Protestant theologian recently queried. He answers: "In theory, that Scripture interprets itself; in practice however, as it doesn't, his own theology."[6]

Remedies against Disagreement. The Outward Word.

Since the harmony of the "Spirit," which Luther had so confidently looked for, failed to show itself in people's minds

[1] Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 389.

[2] "To the Christians at Antwerp" early in April, 1525. "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 342; "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 151.

[3] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 53, p. 343.

[4] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 20, p. 571; Erl. ed., 41, p. 210.

[5] O. Scheel, *ibid.*, pp. 38, 55. Cp. F. Loofs, above, p. 403, n. 1.

[6] W. Köhler, "Theol. Literaturztng.," 1902, No. 21, p. 576, review of H. Preuss, "Die Entwicklung des Schriftprinzips bei Luther."

and not a glimmer of hope of any future agreement was visible, he found it necessary to insist far more strongly than heretofore on the outward Word;[1] this was to check unwelcome inward revelations, to put everything in order and to be a bulwark against unusual views. "Now that the Apostles have preached the Word," so runs one of his most interesting pronouncements on this subject,[2] "and left us their writings, so that there is nothing more to reveal than what they have written, there is no need of any special new revelation, or miracles. This we know from the writings of the Apostles." It would be a different matter if all were filled with the Holy Ghost and His gifts; "were this so it would be an easy thing to preach and to govern and all would go on quite smoothly and well, as indeed it ought. But unfortunately this is not the case, and those who have the Holy Ghost and a right understanding are not so common," but "there are plenty who fancy they have mastered Scripture and have the Holy Ghost without measure." These want to be thought "far more deeply and profoundly initiated" than Luther himself, and "much more learned than we are." This he is not unwilling to allow, but on one thing he must insist, viz. on the "Word!" "This old and tried doctrine of the Apostles" he has "again brought to light," having found "all this darkened by the Pope and his human teaching"; "by the Grace of God we have brought it to light once more"; "it is the very same as the Apostles first taught. But it has not been brought to light again without a revelation of the Holy Ghost. . . . He had to illumine our minds that Holy Scripture might be rightly viewed and understood"; hence "no other word or revelation is to be expected" "contrary to this doctrine, even were an angel from heaven visibly to bring" a new doctrine. Everyone can see "that God is tempting the people, particularly in these latter days of which it is said, that the devil shall rule mightily over Christendom by means of Antichrist."—Here, consequently, his teaching is put on a level with the "outward Word."

The outward Word, according to other passages where Luther is rather more reticent concerning the "revelation" he had received, was that plain and unassailable Bible

[1] Above, *passim*.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 50, pp. 85–88.

teaching on which all "Spirits" must agree without any danger of divergency. This Word he now identifies with preaching. Preaching, however, is part of the office, and both office and preaching were controlled by Luther; indeed the office had been instituted chiefly by him and his sovereign. Hence, in effect, the outward Word is still Luther's word.

"Faith," we read of the outward Word, seemingly contradicting the freedom Luther had formerly proclaimed, "comes of hearing, i.e. from preaching, or from the outward Word. This is the order established by God and He will not derogate from it. Hence contempt for the outward Word and for Scripture is rank blasphemy, which the secular authorities are bound to punish, according to the second Commandment which enjoins the punishment of blasphemy." This occurs in the booklet officially circulated in 1536 among the pastors of the Saxon Electorate.[1] A Protestant researcher who has recently made a special study of the "Inquisition" in the Saxon Electorate has the following remark concerning this statement, which is by no means without a parallel in Luther's works: "Thus even contempt for Scripture—here meaning contempt for Luther's interpretation of the Bible text—was already regarded as 'rank blasphemy' which it was the duty of the authorities to punish. To such a pass had Evangelical freedom already come."[2]

In order to uphold his own reading of the Bible against others which differed from his, Luther incidentally appealed with the utmost vigour, as the above examples show, to the Church, to tradition and to the Fathers, whose authority he had nevertheless solemnly renounced.

This was the case especially in the controversies on the Zwinglian doctrine of the Supper. In defending the Real Presence and the literal sense of the words of consecration, Luther was in the right. He could not resist the temptation to adduce the convincing testimony of tradition, the voice of the "Church" from the earliest ages, which spoke so loudly in defence of the truth. It was then that he wrote the oft-quoted words to Albert of Brandenburg, in order to retain him on his side and to preserve

[1] P. Wappler, "Inquisition und Ketzerprozesse in Zwickau zur Reformationszeit," Leipzig, 1908, p. 69. The booklet was written by Melanchthon but was certainly circulated with Luther's approval.

[2] Wappler, *ibid.*

him from Zwinglian contamination : " That Christ is present in the Sacrament is proved by the books and writings, both Greek and Latin, of the dear Fathers, also by the daily usage and our experience till this very hour ; which testimony of all the holy Christian Churches, even had we no other, should suffice to make us remain by this article."[1] It is true that elsewhere we find him saying of the tradition of the Fathers : " When the Word of God comes down to us through the Fathers it seems to me like milk strained through a coal-sack, when the milk must needs be black and nasty." This meant, he says, " that the Word of God was in itself pure and true, bright and clear, but by the teaching of the Fathers, by their books and their writings, it was much darkened and corrupted."[2] " And even if the Fathers agreed with you," he says elsewhere, " that is not enough. I want Holy Writ, because I too am fighting you in writing."[3]

In his controversy with Zwingli, Luther even came to plead the cause of the Catholic principle of authority. In his tract of 1527, " Das diese Wort Christi, ' Das ist mein Leib ' noch fest stehen," he declared that Zwingli's interpretation of the Bible had already given rise to " many opinions, many factions and much dissension." Such arbitrary exegesis neither can nor may go any further. " And if the world is to last much longer, we shall on account of such dissensions again be obliged, like the ancients, to seek for human contrivances and to set up new laws and ordinances in order to preserve the people in the unity of the faith. This will succeed as it succeeded before. In fine, the devil is too clever and powerful for us. He hinders us and stops the way everywhere. If we wish to study Scripture he raises up so much strife and dissension that we tire of it. . . . He is, and is called, Satan, i.e. an adversary." He here attributes to the devil the defects of his own Scriptural system, and puts away as something wrong even the very thought that it contained faults, another trait to his psychological picture : " The devil is a conjurer." " Unless God assists us, our work and counsel is of no avail. We may think of it as we like, he still remains the Prince of this world. Whoever does not believe this, let him simply try and see. Of this I have experienced something. But let no one believe me until he has himself experienced it."[4] There is no doubt, that, in 1527, Luther did have to go through some severe struggles of conscience.

The Swiss held fast to " Scripture " and to their own " Spirit."

H. Bullinger, the leader of the Zwinglians, proved more logical than Luther in his interpretation of the new principle of Scripture. In his book on the difference between the Evangelical and

[1] Letter of Feb. or beginning of March, 1532, " Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 552 ; Erl. ed., 54, p. 288 (" Briefwechsel," 9, p. 157).

[2] " Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 50, Table-Talk, in connection with some words reported to have been uttered by Andreas Proles, which, however, were certainly meant by him in a different sense.

[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 632 ; Erl. ed., 27, p. 235.

[4] *Ibid.*, 23, p. 69=30, p. 19 f.

Roman doctrines (Zürich, 1551) he deliberately rejected quite a number of traditional, Catholic practices which Luther had spared; for instance, the use of religious pictures in the churches, ceremonies, the liturgical chants, confession, etc. With this same weapon he attacked not only Catholicism, but also Luther's doctrine of the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament and the whole Church system as introduced by the Wittenbergers.

Luther, for his part, in order to retain the Bible on his side, used a very arbitrary method of Scripture interpretation both against the Swiss theologians and against Catholicism and its defenders. In many cases it was only his peculiar exegesis (to be considered below, xxviii., 2) that furnished him with the Scriptural arguments he needed.

Thus, in his attitude towards Scripture, the Wittenberg Professor wavers between tradition, to which he frequently appeals almost against his will, and that principle of independent study of the Bible under enlightenment from on high, which is ever obtruding itself on him. The latter principle he never denied, in spite of his sad experiences with the doctrine that everyone who is taught by the Holy Ghost can draw from Scripture his own belief, and, according to St. Paul, with the help of this light, test the teaching and opinions of all.[1] Yet—strange as it may seem on the part of an assailant of authority—the last word on matters of faith belongs, according to him, to authority. This is his opinion for practical reasons, because not everyone can be expected, and but few are able, to undertake the task of finding their belief for themselves in the Bible. Moreover, what one may possibly have learnt from Scripture at the cost of toil and with the help of inspiration, cannot so readily become the common property of all. On the other hand, according to Luther, the "*exterius iudicium*" which is supported by the "*externa claritas*" of Scripture, as interpreted by himself and proclaimed with authority by the preachers, was intended for all.[2]

[1] "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 441. Here he says in his "Contra regem Angliæ": "*De doctrina cognoscere et iudicare pertinet ad omnes et singulos Christianos et ita pertinet, ut anathema sit, qui hoc ius uno pilo læserit. . . . Nunc autem (Christus) non solum ius, sed præceptum, iudicandi statuit, ut hæc sola auctoritas satis esse queat adversus omnium pontificum, omnium patrum, omnium conciliorum, omnium scholarum sententias. . . . Huic subscribunt ferme omnes omnium prophetarum syllabæ. . . . Habet hic Henricus noster aut ullus impurus Thomista, quod istis obganniat? Nonne obstruximus os loquentium iniqua?*"

[2] Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 1^2, p. 379.

The Way of Settling Doubts Concerning Faith. Assurance of Salvation and Belief in Dogma.

When we come to examine Luther's teaching on the nature of the faith which is based on the Bible and to enquire how doubts regarding this Bible teaching were to be quieted, we are again faced by the utmost waywardness.

In his "Von beider Gestallt des Sacramentes" (1522), Luther says of belief in the truths of revelation generally: "And it is not enough for you to say: Luther, Peter or Paul has said it, but you must feel Christ Himself in your own conscience and be assured beyond all doubt that it is really the Word of God, even though all the world should be against it. So long as you have not this feeling it is certain that you have not tasted the Word of God, but are still hanging by your ears on the lips or the pen of man and not clinging with all your heart to the Word." Since Christ is the one and only teacher it is plain "what horrid murderers of souls those are [viz. the Papists] who preach to souls the doctrines of men."[1]

The whole passage is of the utmost practical importance, because in it Luther seeks to solve the question anxiously asked by so many: Who will assure us that all that we are now told that we must believe if we do not wish to lose our souls, is really the teaching of Christ? To this he here gives an answer which is intended to satisfy even one in danger of death and to instruct him fully on the matter of his salvation.

The olden Church had given her faithful a clear answer which set every doubt at rest: The warrant for our belief is the authority of the Church instituted by Christ and endowed by God with infallibility. In effect the voice of the General Councils, the decisions of an unbroken line of vicars of Christ on the Papal throne, the teaching of the hierarchy everywhere and at every time, the consensus of the faithful, in brief, the outward testimony of Christ's whole Church, aroused in all hearts the happy certainty that the faith offered was indeed the revelation of God; people, indeed, believed in God and in His Word, but what they believed was what the Church proposed for belief. The Church also declared, though not in the same sense as Luther, "*Fides non ullorum auctoritate sed Spiritu solo Dei oritur in corde.*"[2] The Church taught, what the Council of Trent emphasised anew, viz. that, by the action of the Holy Ghost alone, i.e. by the supernatural Grace of God which exalts the powers of man, faith attains to what is requisite for salvation.

Luther, who overthrew the authority of the Church's teaching office, was unable to provide the soul in its struggle after faith with any guarantee beyond his own authority to take the Church's place. In his "Von beider Gestallt des Sacramentes" he refers to Christ Himself the man oppressed by doubt and fear, viz. to a

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 23; Erl. ed., 28, p. 298.
[2] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 2, p. 429 f.; "Opp. lat. var.," 3, p. 287.

court of appeal inaccessible to the seeker, and this he did at a time when he himself had started all kinds of discussions on the sense of the Gospel, and when Christ was being claimed in support of the most widely divergent views. He refers the enquirer to Christ, because here he deems it better not to say plainly " hold fast to me," though elsewhere such an admonition was not too bold a one for him to give. " Think rather for yourself," such is his advice, " you have death or persecution in front of you, and I cannot be with you then nor you with me. Each one must fight for himself and overcome the devil, death and the world. Were you at such a time to be looking round to see where I was, or I to see where you were, or were you disturbed because I or anyone else on earth asserted differently, you would be lost already and have let the Word slip from your heart, for you would be clinging, not to the Word, but to me or to some other ; in that case there is no help."[1]

He thus leaves the anxious man " to himself " at the most awful of moments ; elsewhere, too, he does the same. When he invites every man to " taste the Word of God " betimes and to " feel " how directly " the Master speaks within his heart," this is merely a roundabout way of repeating the comfortless warning that " each one must fight for himself." In other words, what he means is : I have no sure warrant to give in the stead of the Church's authority ; you must find out for yourself whether you have received the true Word of Christ by consulting your own feelings.

In addition to this, in the opinion of many Protestant theologians, the faith to be derived from the Bible which everyone must necessarily arrive at was very much circumscribed by Luther. " Man's attitude towards Christ and His saving Grace " loomed so large with him, that it " decided the question whether a man was, or was not, a believer." If, in the Protestantism of to-day, Luther's " idea of faith " is frequently taken rather narrowly, it must be admitted that in many of his statements and demands he himself goes even further. We have here to do with that " two-sidedness in his attitude towards Scripture," which " is apparent at every period of his life."[2] If we keep to the earlier and more " liberal " side of his " Evangelical conception of faith," then indeed the trusting and confident assumption of such a relationship with Christ would

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 23 ; Erl. ed., 28, pp. 298, 299. Cp. above, p. 397, n. 1, also pp. 398 and 400, on the " *iudicium interius.*"

[2] The last words are from Scheel. See above, p. 392, n. 2, p. 76.

certainly be " decisive in the question whether a man was a believer or not, and Luther himself frequently used this criterion, for instance, when he answers as follows the question: Who is a member of the Church and whom must one regard as a dear brother in Christ: ' All who confess Christ as sent by God the Father in order to reconcile us by His death and to obtain grace for us '; or again elsewhere: ' All those who cling to Christ alone and confess Him in faith,' or, yet again: All those ' who seek the Lord with all their heart and soul, and trust only in God's mercy.'[1] In such utterances we have the purely religious conception of Evangelical faith clearly summarised." (Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 13.)

Agreeably with this conception of faith, some Protestants have contended that Luther should have been much more broad-minded with regard to doubts and to doctrines which differed from his own; his opposition to other views, notably to those of the Zwinglians, brought him, however, to another conception of faith, to one more closely related to the Catholic theory. According to Catholic doctrine, faith is a firm assent to all that God has revealed and the Church proposes for belief. It is made up of many articles, not one of which can be set aside without injury to the whole. Luther, so we are told, " owing to his controversy with Zwingli, ran the risk of exchanging his conception of faith for this one [the Catholic one], according to which faith is the acceptance of a whole series of articles of faith."

In reality he did not merely " run the risk " of reaching such a doctrine; he had, all along, even in earlier days, been moving on these same lines, albeit in contradiction with himself. It was in fact nothing altogether new when he wrote in the Articles of Schwabach: " Such a Church is nothing else than the faithful in Christ, who believe, hold and teach the above Articles."[2] The faith for which he

[1] Cp. " Werke," Weim. ed., 28, p. 580 ff.; Erl. ed., 36, p. 234 f.; 52, p. 392.

[2] Article 12. " Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 181; Erl. ed., 24^2, p. 343. G. Kawerau adds, when quoting this passage (Möller's " Lehrb. der KG.," 3^3, p. 104), " It is here, therefore, that the ' Communion of Saints ' begins to become Luther's confessional Church."—The Articles of Schwabach, which were sent by Luther to the Elector after the Conference of Marburg (above, vol. iii., p. 381), probably on Oct. 7, 1529, were mainly intended to oppose the Zwinglians. It is when repudiating them, as non-Christians, that Luther puts forward the above conception of the Church.

wishes to stand always comprised the contents of the oldest Creeds, and he prefers to close his eyes to the fact that they were really undermined by his other propositions. By these articles he is determined to abide. Hence it is hardly fair to appeal to him in favour of their abrogation, and any such appeal would only serve to emphasise his self-contradiction. Luther himself, when dealing with opponents, frequently speaks of the breaking of a single link as being sufficient to make the whole chain fall apart. "All or nothing" was his cry, viz. the very same as Catholics had used against his own innovations. In short, in his "two-sidedness," he, quite generally, seeks a sure foothold against difficulties from within and from without in the principle of authority in its widest meaning, and, when trying to safeguard the Apostles' Creed and the "œcumenical symbols," he appeals expressly to the Catholic past. He says that by thus vindicating the Apostles' Creed and that of Nicæa he wished to show that he "was true to the rightful, Christian Church, which had retained them till that day."[1] The Fathers preserved them and, as in the case of the Athanasian Creed, supplemented and enlarged the traditional formulas, the better to counter heretics; Luther is even willing to accept new terms not found in Scripture, but coined by the Church, such as "*peccatum originale*" or "*consubstantialis*" (ὁμοούσιος),[2] since they might profitably be employed against false teachers.

Protestant Objections to Luther's so-called "Formal Principle."

"It is not for us to tone down or conceal the contradictions which present themselves," writes a Protestant theologian who has made Luther's attitude towards Scripture the subject of particular study. ". . . Even judged by the standard of his own day Luther does not display that uniformity which we are entitled to expect. . . . The psychological motives in particular are very involved and spring from different sources. The very fact that throughout his life he exhibited a certain obstinacy and violence towards both himself and others, must render doubtful any attempt to trace everything back to a single source.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 23, p. 252 ff., in the preface to his edition of these Creeds, and the "*Te Deum*," 1538.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 117; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 505.

Obstinacy always points to contradictions." This author goes so far as to say: "We might almost give vent to the paradox, that only in these contradictions is uniformity apparent; such a proposition would, however, hold good only before the court of psychology." "To-day it is not possible to embrace Luther's view in its entirety."[1]

In an historical account of Luther's teaching (and it is in this that most Protestant scholars are interested) we must, as we advance, ever keep in view Luther's whole individuality with all its warring elements. The difficulty thus presented to our becoming better acquainted with his views is, however, apparent from the words already quoted from one of Luther's biographers concerning Luther's wealth of ideas, which also, to some extent, apply even to his statements on dogma: "Every word Luther utters plays in a hundred lights and every eye meets with a different radiance which it would gladly fix."[2]

In spite of the difficulties arising from this character of the Wittenberg Doctor, early orthodox Lutheranism taught that he had set up the "*sola scriptura*" as the "formal principle" of the new doctrine. According to eminent authorities in modern Protestantism, however, this formal principle was stillborn; it was never capable in practice of supporting an edifice of doctrine, still less of forming a community of believers. Hence the tendency has been to make it subservient to the "Evangelical" understanding of the Bible.

Thus F. Kropatscheck, the author of the learned work "Das Schriftprinzip der lutherischen Kirche" (1904), says candidly, "that the formal principle of Protestantism [Scripture only] does not suffice in itself as a foundation for the true Christian life whether of the individual or of a community." "Where the Evangelical content is lacking, the formal principle does not rise above sterile criticism."[3]

Kropatscheck's examination of the mediæval views on Scripture led him moreover to recognise, that, in theory at least, the Bible always occupied its due place of honour; its content was, however, so he fancies, not understood until Luther rediscovered it as the Gospel of the "forgiveness of sins through Christ."[4] So far, according to him, did esteem for Scripture as the Word of God go in the Middle Ages, that he even ventures to characterise the formula "*sola scriptura*" as "Catholic commonplace";[5]

[1] Scheel, *ibid.*, p. 75. [2] Above, vol. iii., p. 21.
[3] Vol. i., p. 58. [4] P. 459. [5] P. 440.

this, however, he can only have intended in the sense in which it was read and supplemented by another Protestant theologian: "In practice this did not exclude the interpretation of Scripture on the lines of tradition."[1] "The so-called formal principle," the above work goes on to say, with quite remarkable fairness to the past, "was much more utilised in the Middle Ages than popular accounts would lead us to suppose. To the Reformation we owe neither the formula ('*sola scriptura*') nor the insisting on the literal sense, nor the theory of inspiration, nor scarcely anything else demanded on the score of pure scriptural teaching."[2] "Almost all" the qualities attributed to Holy Scripture in the early, orthodox days of Protestantism "are already to be met with in the Middle Ages."[3]

In the same work Kropatscheck rightly sums up the teaching

[1] W. Köhler in his review of Kropatscheck ("Theol. Literaturztng.," 1905, col. 453 ff.).

[2] P. 459. For proofs that, in the Middle Ages, the Bible occupied its due position in the faith and life of Christians, cp. K. Holzhey, "Die Inspiration der hl. Schrift in den Anschauungen des MA.," 1895.

[3] Instructive indeed are the detailed proofs given in Kropatscheck's work of how the heretical Waldenses, and, after them, Wiclif and Hus, used the "*sola scriptura*" against tradition and the authority of the Church. The example of the Waldenses had already shown that it was quite impossible to use the principle without accepting at the same time certain of the doctrines of the Church (p. 17 ff.). With Hus "the formula '*sola scriptura*' rings again and again in his writings as a battle-cry" (p. 76). He wants the "*lex Christi*" and no "*leges novæ*," hence, no Decretals, indulgences, Crusade-Bulls, priesthood or celibacy. The revolutionary force of the formula is noticeable in Hus and still more in the later Hussites; they declared the "Law of Grace" to be sufficient even for civil life, and, as "avengers of Scripture," proclaimed war on those lords who thought differently, the Princes and the monasteries. Wiclif, "a Bible theologian from head to foot," who even finds in Scripture all the wisdom and learning of the world, and describes it as a book everyone can understand, registered a success which was "great" only in the revolutionary sense. The Bible standpoint of Occam, to which Kropatscheck also devotes attention, has something in common with that of Luther (cp. Kropatscheck, "Occam und Luther," in "Beiträge zur Förderung christl. Theol.," 1900, p. 49 ff.). Kropatscheck emphasises the fact, that Occam, in his opposition to the Pope, had conceded to "the whole Church" the right of interpretation, and, like Marsilius of Padua, wished to set aside man-made laws for the Bible and the law of nature. The history of the Middle Ages and the "apocalyptic, political and social" trends connected with Holy Scripture show how dangerous and subversive any arbitrary treatment of the Bible could be. The written Word of God becomes a weapon wherewith to rouse the passions against the highest powers, an excuse for gross millenarianism and libertinism, and a veritable mine to be exploited by stupid, crazy fanatics.—Cp., on Kropatscheck, M. Buchberger, in "Theol. Revue," 1906, p. 118 ff.; his review concludes as follows: "that no solid foundation can be won, but that everything totters without an authoritative, and, in the last instance, infallible, exponent of Holy Scripture. The call for such an exponent is the final conclusion powerfully borne in on the mind."

on the inspiration of the canonical books, of St. Thomas Aquinas, the principal exponent of the mediæval biblical teaching, doing so in a couple of sentences the clearness and conclusiveness of which contrast strangely with the new doctrine : " The effect of inspiration," according to this Doctor of the Church, implies, negatively, preservation from error, positively, an enlightenment, both for the perception of supernatural truth and for the right judging of natural verities. Beyond this, a certain impulse from on high was needed to move the sacred scribes to write the burden of their message.[1]

That in the past the doctrine of interpretation was bound up with the doctrine of inspiration, is, according to the statements of another Protestant writer, P. Drews,[2] expressed as follows by the Catholic voice of Willibald Pirkheimer : " We should have to look on ourselves as reprobate were we to despise even one syllable of Holy Scripture, for we know and firmly believe that our salvation rests solely and entirely on the Gospel. Hence we have it daily in our hands and read it and regard it as the guide of our lives. But no one can blame us if we place greater reliance on the interpretation of the holy, ancient Fathers than on some garbled account of Holy Scripture, since it is, alas, daily evident that there are as many different readings of the Word of God as there are men. Herein lies the source of all the evils and disorders, viz. that every fool would expound Scripture, needless to say, to his own advantage."[3]

Protestant theologians have recently been diligent in studying Luther's teaching on the Bible. The conclusions arrived at by O. Scheel, who severely criticises Luther, have several times been quoted in this work. K. Thimme, in a scholarly work entitled " Luthers Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift,"[4] has pointed out that Luther, who " affirms the existence of real inaccuracies in Holy Scripture," nevertheless, in the very year that he expressed contempt for certain books of the New Testament, loudly demanded " the firmest belief (' *firmissime credatur* '), that nothing erroneous is contained in the canonical books."[5]

A. Galley, a theologian to whom it fell to review the book, declared, that, unfortunately, in spite of this and other essays on the subject, no sure and decisive judgment on Luther's attitude towards Holy Scripture had yet been arrived at.[6]—Does this not, perhaps, amount to saying that any ultimate verdict of harmony, truth and absence of contradictions is out of the question ?

R. Seeberg in one work emphasises " Luther's independent and critical attitude towards the books of the Old and New

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 433.
[2] " W. Pirkheimers Stellung zur Reformation," 1887, p. 117.
[3] From Pirkheimer's " Oratio apolog.," for the Convent of St. Clare at Nuremberg, in " Opp.," ed. M. Goldast, 1610, p. 375 *seq.*
[4] Gütersloh, 1903, p. 84 ff.
[5] " Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 195 ; " Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 408.
[6] " Theol. Literaturblatt," 1905, col. 41.

Testament Canon." "Scripture is to be believed not on the external authority of the Church but because it is revelation tested by experience. . . . Scripture was to him the standard, test and measure of all ecclesiastical doctrine, but this it was as the expression of the experienced revelation of God."[1]

This statement Seeberg further explains elsewhere: "Though, in his controversies, Luther pits Scripture as the 'Divine law' against all mere ecclesiastical law [viz. the Church's dogma], yet he regarded it as authoritative simply in so far as it was the original, vigorous witness to Christ and His salvation. Considered in this light, Scripture, however, cannot be put side by side with justifying faith as the second principle of Protestantism. The essential and fundamental thought is faith."—What Seeberg here says is quietly aimed at the later, orthodox, Lutheran theologians who took from Luther the so-called formal principle of Protestantism, viz. the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. "How is it possible, in view of Luther's reprobation of certain things in the Bible . . . and his admission that it contained mistakes, to imagine any verbal inspiration?"[2]

Seeberg has also a remarkable account of Luther's views on the relation to Scripture of that faith which in reality is based on inward experience: "The specific content of Scripture" is "Christ, His office and kingdom." To this content it is that faith bears witness by inward experience (see above, p. 404 f.). For faith is "the recognition by the heart of the Almighty love revealed to us in God. . . . This recognition involves also the certainty that I am in the Grace of God." "The truth of Scripture is something demonstrated inwardly," etc. "The external, legal founding of doctrine upon dogma is thus set aside, and an end is made of the ancient canon of Vincent of Lerins. Even the legal [dogmatic] application of Scripture is in principle done away with." Of the extent to which Luther carried out these principles the author says in conclusion: "That his practice was not always exemplary and devoid of contradiction can merely be hinted at here."[3]

It would have been better to say straight away that no non-contradictory use of contradictory principles was possible.

Dealing with a work by K. Eger ("Luthers Auslegung des Alten Testamentes"), W. Köhler said: "Any interpretation not limited by practical considerations . . . was quite unknown to Luther, hence we must not seek such a thing in him. . . . Our best plan is to break with Luther's principle of interpretation." And, before this: "Luther's principle of interpretation is everywhere the '*fides*,' and what Luther has to offer in the way of sober, 'historical' interpretation is no growth of his own garden but a fruit of Humanism. . . . Just as the Schoolmen found their theology in the Old Testament, so he did his."[4]

[1] "Grundriss der DG.," etc.[3], Leipzig, 1910, p. 130.

[2] "Lehrbuch der DG.," 2nd part, Erl., 1898, p. 289.

[3] Pp. 288, 283, 290 f.

[4] "Theol. Literaturztng.," 1901, col. 272. O. Ritschl ("DG.," 1, 1908, p. 69 ff.) judges more favourably.

Luther's method of interpretation, however, presents much that calls for closer examination.

2. Luther as a Bible-Expositor

"Luther in his quality of Bible-expositor is one of the most extraordinary and puzzling figures in the domain of religious psychology."[1]

Some Characteristics of Luther's Exegesis.

It is true that some of Luther's principles of exegesis are excellent, and that he has a better perception than many of his predecessors of the need of first ascertaining the literal sense, and, for this purpose, of studying languages. He is aware that the fourfold sense of Holy Scripture, so often wrongly appealed to, must retire before the literal meaning, and that we must ever seek what the sacred writer really and obviously meant, in whatever dress we find his ideas clothed. Some quite excellent observations occur in his works on the danger of having recourse to allegorical interpretations and of not taking the text literally.

Luther himself, it is true, in his earlier postils, frequently makes use of the allegory so dear to mediæval writers, often investing what he says in poetic and fantastic forms. Later on, however, he grew more cautious. Here again the abuse of allegory by the fanatics had its effect. In addition to this his constant efforts to prove his doctrine against theological gainsayers within and without his camp, forced him in his arguments to use the literal sense of the Bible, or at least what he considered such. The advantages of his German translation of the Bible will be spoken of elsewhere (see vol. v., xxxiv., 3).

Yet he lacked one thing essentially required of an expositor, viz. theological impartiality, nor was he fair to those means by which the Church's interpreters were guided in determining the sense of Scripture.

Concerning the latter, it is enough to remember how lightheartedly he threw overboard the interpretation of the whole of the Christian past. His wantonness, which led him to esteem as of no account all the expositions and teachings of previous ages, deprived his exegesis of much help and

[1] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 3, p. 156.

also of any stable foundation. Even considered from the merely natural standpoint, real progress in religious knowledge must surely be made quietly and without any sudden break with what has already been won by the best minds by dint of diligent labour.

The rock on which Luther suffered shipwreck was however above all his complete lack of impartiality. In his work as expositor his concern was not to do homage to the truth in whatever shape he might encounter it in the texts he was interpreting, but to introduce into the texts his own ideas. Bearing in mind his controversy and his natural temperament, this cannot, however, surprise us. Hence it is not necessary to take too tragically the tricks he occasionally plays with Bible texts. Some of these have been most painstakingly examined,[1] and, indeed, it was not without its advantages to have the general complaints raised thus verified in individual instances. Thanks to his investigations Döllinger was able to write : " False interpretations of the most obvious and arbitrary kind are quite the usual thing in his polemics. It would hardly be possible to carry this further than he did in his writings against Erasmus in the instances quoted even by Planck. Indeed, examples of utter wilfulness and violence to the text can be adduced in great number from his writings." Most frequently, as Döllinger points out, " his interpretation is false, because he foists his own peculiar ideas on the biblical passages, ideas which on his own admission he reached not by a calm and dispassionate study of the Bible, but under conditions of painful mental disturbance and anxiety of conscience." To this he was urged by the unrest certain Bible-sayings excited in him ; in such cases, as Döllinger remarks, he knew how " to pacify his exegetical conscience by telling himself, that all this disquiet was merely a temptation of the devil, who wanted to puzzle him with passages from Scripture and thus drive him to despair."[2]

The whole of his exegesis is pervaded by his doctrine of Justification. In this sense he says in the preface to Galatians, the largest of his exegetico-dogmatic works : " Within me this one article of faith in Christ reigns

[1] Döllinger, *ibid.*, pp. 156–173. Denifle, " Luther und Luthertum," 1^2, pp. 80 f., 668 ff., 675, 688, 716, and *passim*.

[2] " Luther, eine Skizze," p. 59 ; " KL.," 8^2, p. 344.

supreme. Day and night all my ideas on theology spring from it and return thereto."[1]

"The article of Justification," he declares, in a disputation in 1537, "is the master and prince, the lord, regent and judge of every form of doctrine, which preserves and rules all ecclesiastical knowledge and exalts our consciousness before God."[2]

Two years before this (1535) he expressed himself still more strongly in a disputation: "Scripture is not to be understood against, but for, Christ. Hence it must either be made to apply to Him—or not be regarded as true Scripture at all."[3]

His highly vaunted idea of Justification he sought to apply first and foremost to those books or passages of the Bible which, as he expressed it, "preach Christ." Though giving the first place in the canonical regard to those writings where Christ is most strongly and fully preached and but scant favour (when he does not reject them entirely) to those where this is not the case, he yet contrives to introduce his own particular Christ into many parts of Scripture which really say nothing about Him. Everything that redounds to the honour of Christ, i.e. to the exaltation of His work of grace in man, as Luther understood it, must be forced into Scripture, while everything that tends to assert man's powers and the need of his co-operation must be expunged, since Christ cannot arrive at His right which He has from the Father except through the utter helplessness of man. The Bible must nowhere know of any inner righteousness on man's part that is of any value in God's sight; it must never place on the lips of Christ any demand, any praise or reward for human effort. All sacred utterances which contradict this are, so he says, in spite of his preference for the literal sense, not to be taken literally. Thus, when the Bible says man *shall*, it does not follow that he *can*; God rather wishes thereby to convince man of his helplessness; nay, what is said in this connection of man and his works really applies to Christ, Who has done everything for us and makes it all ours by faith.[4]

"There were times in his life when the antithesis between faith and works so dominated him and filled his mind, that the whole Bible seemed to him to have been written simply to illustrate and emphasise this doctrine of Justification."[5]

Two portions of Holy Scripture, viz. the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians, according to him, hold the first place in their eulogy of Christ, by their recommendation of

[1] "Comm. in Gal.," 1, p. 3, Irmischer.

[2] "Disputationes," ed. Drews, p. 119: "*Articulus iustificationis est magister et princeps, dominus, rector et iudex super omnia genera doctrinarum, qui conservat et gubernat omnem doctrinam ecclesiasticam et erigit conscientiam nostram coram Deo.*"

[3] "Disputationes," p. 11, n. 41.

[4] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 3, p. 158.

[5] *Ibid.*

faith in Him alone. Hence "all questions and all the more obscure passages of Scripture are to be solved and explained by these two epistles."[1] If, in the Bible, good works are extolled or almsgiving praised, the word "*fide*" must always be understood, since the meaning cannot but be that such works are profitable by faith.[2]

In the case of the Evangelists, Matthew and Luke in particular, we must expound their writings in accordance with the doctrine of Justification through Christ and man's own helplessness. "Scripture must be interpreted according to this article. . . . When Matthew and Luke speak of good works, they are to be understood and judged according to this rule.[3]

Thus, in all questions of exegesis the "preaching of Christ" is conclusive. We must, first of all, see whether each book commonly reckoned to form part of the Bible really "preaches Christ," and, where this is so, the same thoughts will control everything else.[4]

In the question of the relation of faith to the interpretation of Scripture, Luther hobbles strangely. On the one hand the Bible is to be interpreted strictly according to faith, on the other, faith is to be won solely from the Bible. The former proposition he thus explains in a sermon: It is a command that the interpretation of Scripture must "rhyme with faith and not teach anything contrary to or differing from what faith teaches." True faith, however, is that which is directed against the power of works, so that any interpretation of the Bible which contradicts this is wrong. Whatever teaches us "to have a good conscience towards God, except by faith alone and without any works, neither resembles nor rhymes with faith."[5] Of the content of faith we are assured above all by inward experience and the Spirit. It is indeed on the "feeling and sentiment" that, in the case of faith, i.e. the acceptance of the Gospel

[1] "Briefe," 6, p. 424, undated, and to a person unnamed: "*Ex his duabus epistolis omnes, quæ incident, quæstiones, vel alioqui scripturæ loca obscuriora interpretator.*"

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 434. Written in a Bible: "*Ad omnia dicta scripturæ, quibus videtur iustitia operum statui, respondebis ex Ebre.* 11, *hac voce: Fide,*" etc.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 33, p. 165 f.; Erl. ed., 47, p. 371. In the Exposition of John vi.–viii. (1530–1532).

[4] Cp. *ibid.*, Erl. ed., 63, p. 157.

[5] *Ibid.*, 8^2, p. 23. Cp. p. 24: "But know that Pope, Councils and the whole world in all their teaching are subject to the meanest Christian, even to a child of seven who has the faith, and that they must accept his opinion."

message of salvation, Luther lays the chief stress.[1] "If you feel it not, you have not the faith, the Word merely rings in your ears and hovers on your lips like foam on water."[2]

Luther is just as determined in proving faith from Scripture as he is in making Scripture subservient to and dependent on faith. "Without Scripture faith soon goes," he exclaims after labouring to bring forward arguments from the Bible in support of the new faith in Christ.[3] "Whatever is advanced without being attested by Scripture or a revelation need not be believed."[4] "To this wine no water must be added";[5] to this sun no lantern must be held up![6] "You must take your stand on a plain, clear and strong word of Scripture, which will then be your support."[7]

The worst of it is, as O. Scheel aptly remarks, that Luther pits his Christ against Scripture and thus makes the latter void.[8]

On the one hand, according to Adolf Harnack, Luther, when making faith the rule of Bible interpretation, becomes a "mediæval exegete" and borrows from the past even his types and allegories. Yet he cuts himself adrift in the most decided fashion from the mediæval exegesis, "not merely when it is a question of Justification," but even "in

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 357; Erl. ed., 14^2, p. 47; cp. p. 379=78.

[2] *Ibid.*, 13^2, p. 231; cp. Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 23; Erl. ed., 28, p. 298.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 145 f.

[4] "*Quod sine scripturis asseritur aut revelatione probata, opinari licet, credi non est necesse.*" "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 508; "Opp. lat var.," 5, p. 30. Cp., *ibid.*, 2, pp. 297, 279, 309–15=3, pp. 89, 62, 106–15.

[5] *Ibid.*, 8, p. 141 f.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 323 f.; cp. p. 143 f.=325 f.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 235=39, p. 132.

[7] *Ibid.*, 10, 3, p. 22 f.=28, p. 223. Cp. R. Seeberg, "Lehrb. der DG.," p. 285 f.

[8] Scheel gives Luther's views on p. 45 as follows: "What is not taught by Christ is not apostolic even should Peter and Paul teach it. But all that preaches Christ is apostolic even should Judas, Annas, Pilate or Herod teach it. ("Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 157.) . . . Hence Luther replies to his opponent, 'You appeal to the slave, i.e. to Scripture, and not even to the whole or the most excellent part of it. This slave I leave for you; as for me, I appeal to the Lord, Who is King of Scripture.'" ("Comm. in Gal.," 1, p. 387, Irmischer.) Scheel quotes the "Comm. in Gen.," 1, p. 539: "*Si adversarii scripturam urserint contra Christum, urgemus Christum contra scripturas.*" He says finally, p. 74: "Luther found himself in Scripture just as the simple man finds in the outward world the answer to his own world of sense; with the unerring instinct of genius he found the essence of Scripture which was at the same time the essence of his own being."

regard to such Scripture passages as contain nothing whatever about the doctrine of Justification and faith, or only alien matter."[1]

For instance, he finds righteousness by works condemned and faith exalted in the very first pages of the Bible; for Cain, his brother's murderer, "clung to works and lost the faith," that was his misfortune; whereas Abel held aloof "from free-will and the merit of works" and "kept the faith in a pure conscience." "The same thing happened later with Isaac and Ismael, Jacob and Esau, and others." —Yet, in spite of such condemnation of works, many passages, particularly in the New Testament, seem to tell in favour of works. This, however, is only due to the fact that at the time of the New Testament writers it was desirable to raise up a bulwark against any too great esteem for faith. Thus it was really not meant quite seriously; in the same way even he himself, so he says, had been obliged to oppose this excessive esteem for faith, because, in his day, and owing to his preaching, the people "wanted merely to believe, to the neglect of the power and fruit of faith" (in good actions).[2]

Owing to his habit of ever reading the Bible through the glass of his doctrine of Justification, his handling of Rom. xi. 32 (in the Vulgate: "*Conclusit Deus omnia in incredulitate ut omnium misereatur*") was such that Döllinger found in it no less than "three falsifications of the words of Paul."[3]

Luther's marginal glosses to his translation of the Bible are open to plentiful objections, for their purpose is to recall the reader as often as possible to the basic theories of his doctrine.[4]

Some Protestants have been exceedingly frank in characterising the strained relations often noticeable between Luther's exegesis and true scholarship.

Friedrich Paulsen, in his "Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts," when dealing with the demand made by the "exegesis of the Reformation," viz. that the reader must cling to the plain text and letter of Scripture, says: "Luther by no means

[1] "Lehrb. d. DG.," 3[4], p. 867.
[2] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 3, p. 158.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 160. For the liberty which Luther permitted himself in his translation of the sacred text, see vol. v., xxxiv., 3.
[4] Cp. Döllinger, *ibid.*, pp. 151–156.

considered himself bound to the letter and the grammatical sense of the text of Scripture. Where the letter was in his favour, he indeed used it against others, the Swiss, for instance, but, where it was not, he nevertheless stands by his guns and knows what Scripture *ought* to have said. Everybody knows with what scant regard he handled certain books of Scripture, estimating their value according as they agreed more or less with his teaching, and even amending them a little when they failed to reach his standard or to present the pure doctrine of justification by faith 'alone' in a light sufficiently strong. . . . In order to understand Scripture it is necessary [according to Luther] to know beforehand what it teaches; Scripture is indeed the rule of doctrine, but, *vice versa,* doctrine is also the rule of Scripture which must be interpreted '*ex analogia fidei.*'"[1]

Referring to Luther's interpretation of the Epistle to the Romans, Adolf Hausrath pithily observes: "Luther read this Epistle to the Romans into everything and found it everywhere." Though Hausrath makes haste to add that this was because "his personal experiences agreed with those of the Epistle to the Romans," still, his reference to the psychological basis of the phenomenon is quite in place. "He had been led to draw from Scripture one basic principle which to him was the embodiment of truth, viz. Justification by Faith. That only which ran counter to this 'faith alone' was to be set aside."[2]

Luther's Exegesis in the Light of His Early Development.

With the help of the newly published Commentary on Romans, written by Luther in his youth (vol. i., p. 184 ff.), we can trace the beginnings of his curious exegesis more easily than was possible before.

What we want first of all is a key to that more than human confidence which prompts the new teacher to blend in one his own interpretation and the actual text of the Bible and to say, "*My* word is the truth." This key is to be found in his early history. It was then, in those youthful days when he began morbidly to brood over the mysteries of the Epistle to the Romans, all unable to grasp the profound thoughts it contained, that the phenomenon in question made its first appearance.

We must call to mind that the young and ardent University professor, though deficient in humility and in the capacity to assimilate the sublime teachings of the Epistle to the Romans, stood all the more under the spell of two misleading ideas which had long dominated him, viz. on the one hand, the supposed

[1] "Gesch.," etc., 1^2, 1896, p. 199.
[2] "Luthers Leben," 2, p. 190 f.

depth and transforming power of the knowledge of Scripture he had already acquired and, on the other, the need of assailing the self-righteous and hypocritical Little Saints and all excessive esteem for good works. In the latter respect the passages in Romans on works, faith and merit—of which he failed to see the real meaning—became dangerous rocks on which Luther's earlier religious convictions suffered hopeless shipwreck. So greatly was he attracted and, as it were, fascinated by the light that seemed to him to stream in on his soul from this Epistle, that he came to see the same thing everywhere. Its suggestive power over him was all the greater because in his then pseudo-mystical train of thought he was fond of comparing himself to the Apostle and of fancying, that, as in that case so in his, inner self-annihilation would lead to his receiving similar favours from God. This self-annihilation in Luther's case was, however, a morbid one.

Luther, in his younger days, had also been grievously tormented with thoughts on predestination. He now fancied, according to what he supposed was Paul's teaching, that to abandon oneself in the hands of God, without will, strength or wish, was the sole means by which he and all other men could find tranquillity. Thus, on the strength of misunderstood inward experiences, he hailed the Epistle to the Romans and, a little later, the Epistle to the Galatians, as the only guide along the strange paths of his future exegesis.

His supposed "experiences of God" became the ruling power by which, thanks to an exegesis entirely new, he was to bring salvation to the whole of mankind.

Hitherto, in spite of all his diligence in the study of the Bible, any idea of upholding his own new interpretation against the existing doctrines of the Church had been altogether foreign to him. In his first manuscript notes and in the Commentary on the Psalms which has only recently come to light, likewise in his earlier sermons, he still looks at everything from the Catholic standpoint ; the Church's authority is still the appointed guardian and interpreter of Holy Scripture. There the Bible is to him unquestionably the divinely inspired book and the true Word of God, though it is, not the individual's, but the Church's duty to draw from its inexhaustible treasures arguments in her own defence and in refutation of the teaching of the heretics. To the teaching of Scripture and to the infallible interpretation of the Church based on the tradition of the Fathers, everyone, so he then held, must submit as Christ Himself had ordained.

Even then, however, he was already convinced that he had received an extraordinary call to deal with Holy Scripture. The very admiration of his fellow-monks for his familiarity with his red leather copy of the Bible, fostered the self-love of the youthful student of the Scriptures. This Staupitz increased by his incautious reference to the future "great Doctor," and by his general treatment of Luther. The written Word of God in which the wide-awake and quick-witted monk felt himself at

home more than any of his fellows quite evidently became so much his own peculiar domain, that, in his opinion, Bible scholarship was the only worthy form of theological learning and ruled every branch of Divine knowledge. He even went further, attributing all the corruption in the Church to "neglect of the Word," i.e. to ignorance of and want of compliance with the Bible Word. On the strength of his accounted profounder knowledge of the "Word," he also reproves the "holy-by-works." Even previous to the lectures on Romans, his conviction of the antithesis between human works and Christ's grace made him read everywhere Christ into Scripture; the Bible, so he says, must be taken to the well-spring, i.e. to the Cross of Christ, having done which we may then be "quite certain to catch" its true meaning. Before Luther's day others in the Church had done the same, though within lawful limits. Among contemporary Humanists even Erasmus had insisted on Christ's being made the centre of Scripture.[1]

Widely as Luther, in his Commentary on Romans, already diverges from the Church's interpretation of St. Paul regarding the doctrine of Justification, yet he still admits, at least in theory, the principle of authority both in the interpretation of the Bible and in general.[2] He rejects without compunction all those heresies which deviate from the Church's guidance. In practice, however, he sets himself above the teaching of the Fathers wherever this runs counter to his views; St. Augustine is forced to witness in his favour even at the expense of the other representatives of tradition, and, as for mediæval scholasticism, it is treated as though it were not at all one of the links in the venerable chain of tradition. On the other hand, Luther allows his exegesis to be influenced by those later and less reputable exponents of scholasticism with whom alone he was acquainted.

On such lines as these did his exegesis of the Bible proceed; on the one hand there was his excessive regard for his own acquaintance with Scripture, and, on the other, his pseudo-mysticism leaning for its support on misunderstood interior revelations and illuminations. A certain sense of his vocation as the Columbus of the Bible ever accompanies him from that time forward.

This psychological condition manifests itself in utterances contained in the lectures on Romans and in later works.

"Here," so he writes in the lectures, "a great stride has been made towards the right interpretation of Holy Scripture, by understanding it all as bearing on Christ . . . even when the surface-sense of the letter does not require it."[3] "All Scripture

[1] On the strength of the biblical labours of Erasmus and of Reuchlin, Zwingli did not scruple to call into question Luther's assertion that it was he who drew "the Bible out from under the bench." "Zwinglis Werke" (1828 ff.), 2, 2, p. 21.

[2] See our vol. i., p. 224 f.

[3] Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans, 1515–1516, ed. J. Ficker, 1908, Glosses, p. 4.

deals everywhere with Christ alone."[1] "All this is said, written or done that human presumption may be humbled and the grace of God exalted."[2] He is ever reading his own thoughts into the oftentimes obscure words of St. Paul, though, that he is so doing is evident neither to his hearers nor to himself. That same eloquence and wealth of imagery are to be found here which are to characterise his later expositions. "Quite unmistakably his language, thought and imagery throughout the work is that of the mystic," remarks the editor of the Commentary. "How much Tauler—whom Luther extols so highly, even when as yet he was so little acquainted with him—has taken possession of Luther's mind and influences his language, would be clear from the Commentary on Romans, even were Tauler's name not mentioned in it."[3]

With the mental attitude assumed quite early in his career the scant regard for Humanism and philosophy he evinces in this Commentary well agrees; further, his use of the Bible as a whip with which to lash unsparingly the abuses rampant in the Church, another peculiarity which was to remain in his treatment of Scripture. The better to appreciate his first attempts at exegesis we may recall, that, even then, he was concerned for the text and its purity, and that, no sooner was Erasmus's Greek edition of the New Testament published, than Luther, who had now reached chapter ix. of the Epistle, began to use it for his lectures.[4]

That Luther's first attempts in the exegetical field were so successful was in great part due to his personal gifts, to his eloquence and to his frankness. Oldecop, a pupil of his, who remained true to the Church, wrote as an old man, that, being as he was then twenty-two years of age, he "had taken pleasure in attending Martin's lectures."[5] The lectures on Romans commenced immediately after Oldecop's matriculation. Christopher Scheurl, the Humanist Professor of Law, reckoned the new exegete among the best of the Wittenberg theologians and said: "Martin Luther, the Augustinian, expounds St. Paul's Epistles with marvellous talent."[6]

In the matter of private interpretation as against the Church's, in these earliest exegetical efforts, he remained, outwardly at least, true to the traditional standpoint, until, little by little, he forsook it, as already described (above, p. 387 ff.). Even his academic Theses of Sept., 1517 ("Against the Theology of the Schools"), based though they were on a misapprehension of Scripture, conclude with the

[1] *Ibid.*, Scholia, p. 240: "*Universa scriptura de solo Christo est ubique.*"
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 253. [3] *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. lxii.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. lv., and vol. i., p. 242 f. [5] Quoted by Ficker, p. lvii.
[6] "Scheurls Briefbuch," ed. Soden and Knaake, 2, p. 2; Ficker, *ibid.*, p. lxv.

assurance, that, " throughout, he neither intended nor had said anything contrary to the Church or at variance with her doctrines."[1]—Then, however, with startling suddenness the change set in.

When, after the storm aroused by the publication of the Indulgence Theses, he wrote his German " Sermon von dem Ablass und Gnade,"[2] he appealed in it repeatedly to the Bible as against the " new teachers," i.e. the Schoolmen, and indeed in as confident a manner as though he alone were learned in Scripture. He says on the first page : " This I say : That it cannot be proved from any Scripture, etc. Much should I like to hear anyone who can testify to the contrary in spite of the fact that some doctors have thought so." And at the end he sums up as follows : " On these points I have no doubt, and they have sufficient warrant in Scripture. Therefore you too should have no doubt and send the Scholastic doctors about their business ! " Shortly before this, in a letter about the Scholastic theologians of his day, particularly those of Leipzig, he declares : " I could almost swear that they understand not a single chapter of the Gospel or Bible."[3] He was, however, greatly cheered to hear that, thanks to his new interpretation of the Bible, prelates, as well as the burghers of Wittenberg, were all saying " that formerly they had neither known nor heard anything of Christ or of His Gospel."[4]

After Tetzel had attacked his Sermon and accused Luther of falsifying the sacred text, and of cherishing heretical opinions, the latter indited his " Eyn Freiheyt dess Sermons Bepstlichen Ablass und Gnad belangend," where he emphasises even more strongly and pathetically the supremacy of Holy Scripture over all outward authority : " Even though all these and a thousand others of the holiest of doctors had held this or that, yet their opinion is of no account compared with a single verse of Holy Writ. . . . They are not in the least to be believed, because the Scripture says : The Word of God no one may set aside or alter."[5]

Carlstadt, whom Luther himself had instructed, outdid

[1] " Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 228 ; " Opp. lat var.," 1, p. 321.
[2] *Ibid.*,p. 239 ff. ; Erl. ed., 27, p. 4 ff.
[3] To Johann Sylvius Egranus, March 24, 1518, " Briefwechsel," 1, p. 174.
[4] To Jodocus Trutvetter, May 9, 1518, *ibid.*, p. 186.
[5] " Werke," Weim ed., 1, p. 384 f. ; Erl. ed., 27, p. 12 f.

his master and advocated entire freedom for the private interpretation of Scripture before Luther could make up his mind to do this. He did not shrink from making his own the following defiant Thesis : " The text of the Bible does not take precedence merely of one or several Doctors of the Church, but even of the authority of the whole Church."[1] It was only after Luther, thanks to his obstinacy and curious methods of reasoning, had extricated himself from his examination at Augsburg, and fled, that he admitted in the statements already given (p. 388) that the word of Scripture was to be set in the first place, and, that, in its interpretation, no account need be made of ecclesiastical authority.[2] This prelude to Luther's new exegetical standpoint, more particularly towards the end, was marked by much fear, doubt and anxiety of conscience. He was worried, to such an extent that his " heart quaked for fear," by a number of Scripture passages and still more by the question : Could the Author of Scripture hitherto have really left His work open to such dire misunderstanding ?

While his powerful rhetoric, particularly when it came to polemics, was able to conceal all the failings of his exposition of the Bible, his real eloquence, his fervour and his popular ways of dealing with non-controversial things imparted to his pulpit-commentaries no less than to his written ones a freshness of tone which improved, stimulated and inspired his followers with love for Holy Scripture and also brought them Bible consolation amidst the trials of life.

3. The Sola Fides. Justification and Assurance of Salvation

The two propositions considered above, fundamental though they are, of the Bible being under the enlightenment of the Spirit the sole rule of faith, and of the untrustworthiness of ecclesiastical authority and tradition, far from having been the first elements to find their place in Luther's scheme, were only advanced by him at a later date and in order to protect his pet dogma.

His doctrine of Justification was the outcome of his dislike for " holiness-by-works," which led him to the

[1] Löscher, " Reformationsacta," 2, p. 80.

[2] In the postscript to the " Acta Augustana," " Werke," Weim. ed., 2, pp. 18, 21 f. ; " Opp. lat. var.," 2, pp. 385 *seq.*, 391 *seq.*

theory of salvation by faith alone, through the imputation of the merits of Christ without any co-operation on man's part, or any human works of merit. This doctrine, from the very first as well as later, was everything to him. This it was which he made it his earliest task to elaborate, and about it he then proceeded to hang the other theories into which he was forced by his conflict with the Church and her teaching, some of which were logically connected with his main article, whilst, in the case of others, the connection was only artificial. Later exponents of Lutheranism termed his doctrine of Justification the material principle of his theology, no doubt in the same sense as he himself reckons it, in a sermon of 1530 in his postils, as : " the only element, article or doctrine by which we become Christians and are called such."

This Evangel, Luther's consoling doctrine, as a matter of fact was simply the record of his own inner past, the most subjective doctrine assuredly that ever sought to enlist followers. As we know, it is already found entire in his Commentary on Romans of 1515–1516.

In order to strengthen, in himself first and then in others, the assurance of salvation it comprised, he amplified it by asserting the believer's absolute certainty of salvation ; this was lacking in his Commentary on Romans, though even then he was drifting towards it. It was only in 1518–1519 that he developed the doctrine of the so-called " special faith," by which the individual assures himself of pardon and secures salvation. Thereby he transformed faith into trust, for what he termed fiducial faith partook more of the nature of a strong, artificially stimulated hope ; it really amounted to an intense confidence that the merits of Christ obliterated every sin.

Of faith in this new sense he says that it is *the* faith. " To have the Faith is assentingly to accept the promises of God, laying hold on God's gracious disposition towards us and trusting in it."[1] In spite of this he continues in the old style to define faith as the submission of reason to all the truths revealed, and even to make it the practical basis of all his religious demands : Whoever throws overboard

[1] " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 54. Cp. " Werke," Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 542, and " Disputationes," ed. Drews, p. 640. Denifle-Weiss, 1^2, pp. 672, 675, 727 ff.

even one single article of faith will be damned ; faith being one whole, every article must be believed.[1] We can understand how opponents within his own camp, of whom he demanded faith in the doctrines he had discovered in the Bible, when they themselves failed to find them there, ventured to remind him of his first definition of faith, viz. the fiducial, and to ask him whether a trustful appropriation of the merits of Christ did not really meet all the demands of "faith." Recent Protestant biographers of Luther point out that Zwingli was quite justified in urging this against Luther. Attacked by Luther on account of his discordant teaching on the Lord's Supper, and that on the score of faith, Zwingli rudely retorted : "It is a pestilential doctrine, by a perversion of the word faith which really means trust in Christ, to lower it to the level of an opinion" ; with this behaviour on Luther's part went "hand in hand a similar change in his conception of the Church founded on faith."[2]

Some Characteristics of the New Doctrine of Justification.

If we take Luther's saving faith we find that, according to him, it produces justification without the help of any other work or act on man's part, and without contrition or charity contributing anything to the appropriation of righteousness on the part of the man to be justified.

Any contrition proceeding from the love of God, or at least from that incipient love of God such as Catholicism required agreeably with both revelation and human psychology, appeared to Luther superfluous ; in view of the power of man's ingrained concupiscence it amounted almost to a contradiction ; only the fear of God's Judgments ("*timor servilis*"), so he declares (vol. i., p. 291), with palpable exaggeration, had ruled his own confessions made in the monastery. At any rate, he was in error when he

[1] Cp., in "Luthers Werke in Auswahl," ed. Buchwald, 2 suppl., 1905, p. 43, O. Scheel's remarks on the writing "De votis monasticis" (Weim. ed., 8, p. 583 ; "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 252), where Luther says that whoever denies the virginity of Mary plays havoc with the whole faith.

[2] Thus A. Berger, "M. Luther," Tl. 2, pp. 98, 100. Cp. this author's view (on p. 100) : "This means an obscuring and impoverishing of the faith as discovered and laid down by himself." The following observation of Berger's is remarkable : "Luther, as theologian, was merely the restorer of primæval Christianity, such as he understood it ; Zwingli, however, understood it otherwise" (p. 102).

declared that this same fear had been the motive in the case of Catholics generally. He persuaded himself that this fear must be overcome by the Evangel of the imputed merits of Christ, because otherwise man can find no peace. The part played by the law is, according to him, almost confined to threatening and reducing man to despair, just as he himself had so often verged on hopelessness through thinking of his own inevitable reprobation; the assurance of salvation by faith, however, appears to every Christian as an angel of help and consolation even minus any repudiation of sin on the part of man's will, for, owing to the Fall, sin cannot but persist.

When he attempts to prove this by his "experiences," we must remind the reader how uncertain his statements are, concerning his own "inward feelings" during his monastic days. It will be pointed out elsewhere (vol. vi., xxxvii.) that these "recollections," with their polemical animus, were of comparatively late growth, though they would have been of far greater service at the outset when still quite fresh.

A more solid basis for estimating the value of his doctrine of Justification is afforded by its connection with his other theological views. As we know, he regarded original sin and the concupiscence resulting from it as actual sin, still persisting in spite of baptism; he exaggerated beyond measure man's powerlessness to withstand the concupiscence which remains with him to the end. Owing to the unfreedom of the will, the devil, according to Luther, holds the field in man's heart and rules over all his spiritual faculties. The Divine Omnipotence alone is able to vanquish this redoubtable master by bestowing on the unhappy soul pardon and salvation; yet sin still reigns in the depths of the heart. No act of man has any part in the work of salvation. Actual grace is no less unknown to him than sanctifying grace. Good works are of no avail for salvation and of no importance for heaven, though, accidentally, they may accompany the state of grace, God working them in the man on whom He has cast His eye by choosing him to be a recipient of faith and salvation. Such election and predestination is, however, purely God's work which man himself can do absolutely nothing to deserve.—Thanks to these errors, the "*sola fides*" and assurance of salvation stand bereft of their theological support.

We must, however, revert to one point again and examine it more closely on account of its historical and psychological importance. This is Luther's doctrine of the slavery of the will, and of God's being the sole agent in man.

This doctrine, already expressed in his Commentary on Romans in connection with his opinion on unconditional predestination,[1] he was afterwards to expound with increasing vehemence.[2] He was delighted to find his rigid views expressed in the Notes of the lectures on Romans and 1 Corinthians, which Melanchthon delivered in 1521 and 1522. These Notes he caused to be printed, and sent them to the author with a preface cast in the form of a letter.[3]

In this letter he assumes the whole responsibility for the publication, and assures Melanchthon that "no one has written better than you on Paul." "I hold that the Commentaries of Jerome and Origen are the merest nonsense and rubbish compared with your exposition. . . . They, and Thomas too, wrote commentaries that are filled with their own conceits rather than with that which is Paul's or Christ's, whereas on the contrary yours teaches us how to read Scripture and to know Christ, and thus excels any mere commentary, which is more than one can say of the others hitherto in vogue."

Such praise for Melanchthon's work, indirectly intended to recoil upon his own doctrine, caused Erasmus to remark of the Preface: "How full of pride it is!"[4]

The doctrine of the unfreedom of the will as here expressed by Melanchthon who then was still the true mouthpiece of Luther, though free from Luther's rhetorical exaggerations, remains extremely harsh.

It contains, for instance, the following propositions: "Everything in every creature occurs of necessity. . . . It must be firmly held that everything, both good and bad, is done by God." "God does not merely allow His creatures to act, but it is He Himself Who acts." As He does what is good, so also He does what is indifferent in man, such as eating and drinking and the other animal functions, and also what is evil, "such as David's adultery and Manlius's execution of his son." The treason of Judas was not merely permitted of God, but, as Augustine says, was the effect of His power. "It is a huge blasphemy to deny

[1] See vol. i., p. 193. [2] See vol. ii., p. 223 ff.

[3] "Ph. Melanchthonis Annotationes in Epistolas Pauli ad Rhomanos et Corinthios," Norimbergæ, 1522. The later editions are quoted in "Corp. ref.," 15, p. 441. In this volume Bindseil has not reprinted the writing owing to Melanchthon's retractation of it (see next page). It should, however, have been printed as an historical document.—The introductory preface, in "Briefe," 2, p. 239, dated July 29, 1522 ("Briefwechsel," 2, p. 438).

[4] Letter of March 12, 1523. Cp. "Zeitschr. für KG.," 2, p. 131.

predestination, the actuality of which we have briefly proved above."[1]

Ten years later Melanchthon had grown shy of views so monstrous; he thought it advisable to repudiate this book, and, in 1532, he dedicated a new Commentary on Romans to the Archbishop of Mayence, whom he was anxious to win over. In the preface he says, that he no longer acknowledged ("*plane non agnosco*")[2] the earlier work which had appeared under his name. Later, after Luther's death, he went so far as to demand the severe punishment of those who denied free-will and questioned the need of good works for salvation.[3]

Luther, on the other hand, as we know, never relinquished his standpoint on the doctrine of free-will. Beside his statements already quoted may be put the following: The will is not only unfree "in everything,"[4] but is so greatly depraved by original sin, that, not content with being entirely passive in the matter of Justification, it actually resists God like the devil. "What I say is, that the spiritual powers are not merely depraved, but altogether annihilated by sin, not less in man than in the devils. . . . Their reason and their will seek those things alone which are opposed to God. Whatever is in our will is evil and whatever is in our reason is mere error and blindness. Thus, in things Divine, man is nothing but darkness, error and depravity, his will is evil and his understanding nowhere."[5]

[1] Owing to the rarity of the work, to which even the editor of the "Briefwechsel" had not access, we give in Latin the passages referred to from the copy contained in the Munich State Library: H 1′: "*Necessario omnia eveniunt in omnibus creaturis. . . . Itaque sit hæc certa sententia, a Deo fieri omnia tam bona quam mala.*" H 2′: "*Nos vero dicemus, non solum permittere Deum creaturis ut operentur, sed ipsum omnia proprie agere, ut, sicut fatentur, proprium Dei opus esse Pauli vocationem ita fateantur, opera Dei propria esse sive quæ media vocantur, ut comedere, bibere, communia cum brutis, sive quæ mala sunt, ut Davidis adulterium, Manlii severitatem animadvertentis in filium. . . . Iam cum constet, Deum omnia facere, non permissive, sed potenter, ut Augustini verbo utamur, ita ut sit eius proprium opus Iudæ proditio sicut Pauli vocatio,*" etc.—For Melanchthon's statement in his "*Loci*" of the Lutheran denial of free-will, see above, vol. iii., p. 346.

[2] "Corp. ref.," 15, p. 441.

[3] Melanchthon in his letter to the Elector August of Saxony, April, 1559. N. Paulus, "Luther und die Gewissensfreiheit," Munich, 1905, p. 52 f. Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 347.

[4] See vol. ii., p. 265.

[5] "Comm. in Ep. ad. Gal.," 1535, vol. i., p. 255. Denifle-Weiss, 1^2, p. 514. Cp. Luther's Sermon of 1523 on the Feast of the Circumcision, "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 508; Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 199: It had been shown long before by the institution of circumcision "that no one could reach God and be saved by works, but only by faith. This is insisted upon throughout the whole of Scripture by teaching and example. Sin in us is not merely a work or deed, but our real nature and essence; for this reason does God circumcise that member which pertains to birth and by which human nature is perpetuated." On the same page we find the following: "Nature is depraved through and through so that no will is left for what is good"; "our nature is

From such a standpoint all that was possible was a mere outward imputation of the merits of Christ, no Justification in the sense in which it was taken by the ancient Church, viz. as a supernatural regeneration by means of sanctifying grace.

Any reliable proofs, theological or biblical, in support of this altogether novel view of Justification will be sought for in vain in the works of Melanchthon and Luther. When Luther speaks of the power of faith in the merits of Christ and of the promises of faith concerning eternal life, as he does, for instance, in the written defence which he handed to Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg, his words and the Bible passages he quotes merely express what the Church had always taught concerning the necessity and efficacy of faith as the condition of the supernatural life to be further developed in the soul by God's Grace and man's co-operation.[1] In spite of this, in that very writing he alleges that he has satisfactorily proved that Justification is effected by fiducial faith.

"No one can be justified," he there writes, "but by faith, in the sense that he must needs believe with a firm faith ('*certa fide credere*') that he *is* justified, and not doubt in any way that he is to attain to grace; for if he doubts and is uncertain, he will not be justified, rather he spits out the grace."[2]

His doctrine of faith alone and of the imputed merits of Christ, was, of all his theological opinions, the one which underwent the least change during his lifetime.[3] Until old age he continued to lay great stress on it both in the University Disputations and in his sermons and writings.[4] Even the inferences drawn from it by Johann Agricola in his Antinomian theses did not cause Luther to waver in the least.

all poisoned and crammed with sin," etc.—The sermon in which the singularly outspoken statement concerning circumcision occurs is also found in the postils. Some unbecoming language is also met at the commencement of the passage in question where Luther says: "It is quite true that God's works and commandments are folly to nature and reason; God's way of acting is mad enough"; Luther, however, hastens to add, "but if we keep our heads and look into it attentively, we shall soon see that all is done in the wisest manner."

[1] Document of Oct. 14, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1 (p. 250 ff.), p. 256 ff.

[2] Cp. our vol. i., p. 384.

[3] Cp. Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 2^2, p. 175, on passages dating from 1532 and 1539.

[4] "Disputationes," pp. 429, 431 (of 1538).

In the Schmalkalden Articles he declares explicitly that Justification consists merely in God's "looking upon" the sinner "as righteous and holy."[1] According to one of his sermons our righteousness comes "altogether from without and rests solely on Christ and His work";[2] elsewhere he says, with the utmost assurance: The Christian is "righteous and holy by virtue of a foreign or outward holiness."[3]

In view of such statements undue stress must not be laid on that Luther says in another passage, which recalls the teaching of the olden Church, viz. that the Spirit of God dwells in the righteous, and fills him with His gifts, nay, with His very "substance,"[4] and that it was this Spirit which gave him the "feeling and the certainty" of being in a state of grace.[5] This is much the same as when Luther describes man's active love of God whereby he becomes united and "one kitchen" with God,[6] whilst, nevertheless, insisting that the strength of the *sola fides* must never be the least diminished by work. "No work must be added to this" (to faith), he says in his postils, "for whoever preaches that guilt and penalty can be atoned for by works has already denied the Evangel."[7] Only at times does he allow himself to follow the voice of nature speaking on behalf of man's co-operation; this he does, for instance, in the passage just referred to, where he admits that human reason is ever inviting man to take a share in working out his salvation by means of his own works.[8]

The forgiveness which God offers "must be seized and believed. If you believe it you are rid of sin and all is right." "This all the Gospels teach."[9] Unfortunately there are "many abandoned people who misuse the Gospel

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2, p. 202.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2^2, p. 257.

[3] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 19, p. 43 *seq.*: "*iustus et sanctus aliena seu extrinseca sanctitate.*"

[4] *Ibid.*, 10, p. 110: "*non tantum per dona, sed quoad substantiam.*"

[5] Cp. the passages in Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 201 f.

[6] "Werke," Er. ed., 18^2, p. 312.

[7] *Ibid.*, 14^2, p. 287. In the light of this we can better understand the words which occur quite early in a writing of Luther's: "*Non iusta agendo iusti efficimur*, as Aristotle taught, but *iusti fiendo et essendo operamur iusta.*" To Spalatin, Oct. 19, 1516, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 64. See below, xxviii., 4.

[8] "Werke," Erl. ed., 14^2, p. 285 f.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 282. Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 226 f., also pp. 181 ff., 186 f., 194.

. . . who think that no one must punish them because the Gospel preaches nothing but forgiveness of sins. To such the Gospel is not preached. . . . To whom is it preached? To those who feel their misery," i.e. to those who are sunk in remorse of conscience and in fears, similar to, or at least faintly resembling, those he had himself once endured. When he applies the words of Psalm 50 to the yearning, the prayers and the struggles of those who thirst for salvation: "A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise," he finds himself again, all unconsciously, on the road to the Church's olden view on man's share in repentance.

What we read in the important notes "*De iustificatione*," written during Luther's stay in the fortress of Coburg and only recently published, differs not at all from his ordinary, purely mechanical view of Justification.[1] These notes are from Luther's amanuensis, Veit Dietrich, and record some conversations concerning a work Luther had planned in reply to the objections against the new doctrine of Justification. Dietrich entitled the collection "*Rhapsodia*."[2]

It is not surprising that at a later date Luther hesitated to appeal to St. Augustine in support of his doctrine so confidently as he once had done. Augustine and all the Doctors of the Church are decidedly against him. On the publication of the complete edition of his works in Latin Luther expressed himself in the preface very diplomatically concerning Augustine: "In the matter of imputation he does not explain everything clearly."[3] Naturally the greatest teacher on grace, who lays such stress on its supernatural character and its gifts in the soul of the righteous, could not fail to disagree with him, seeing that Luther's system culminates in the assurance, that grace is the merest imputation in which man has no active share, a mere favour on God's part, "*favor Dei*."[4]

Augustine's views of the powers and the end of man in the natural as well as the supernatural order have been clearly set forth in their connection with the trend of present-day scholar-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 652. First published by G. Berbig, "Der Veit-Dietrich-Codex in der Nürnb. Stadtbibliothek," 1907.

[2] Cp. Th. Kolde in the "Beitr. z. Bayerischen KG.," 14, 1908, p. 139 ff. Kolde rightly refers Luther's words to Melanchthon, viz. that he would send him a writing, "*si volet Christus, de iustificationis loco*" (Aug. 24, 1530, from the fortress of Coburg, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 204), to the above work, and disagrees with Enders' remark on the subject.

[3] "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 23: "*De imputatione non clare omnia explicat.*"

[4] Cp. Denifle-Weiss, 1^2, p. 521.

ship by an eminent Catholic researcher. The latter points out that a strong revulsion against Luther's idea of outward imputation has shown itself in Protestantism, and that the "historical theology" of our day largely acknowledges the existence of the Catholic doctrine "in the olden ecclesiastical and, indeed, even in the New-Testament world." The same holds good of Augustine as of Paul. "Not the '*sola fides*,' but the renewal of the interior man, a 'true and real new creation,' was the essence of Paul's doctrine of justification."[1]

The Striving after Absolute Certainty of Salvation.

Luther was chiefly concerned in emphasising the indispensable necessity of particular faith in personal justification and personal salvation.

Whereas the Church had required faith in our real, objective redemption by Christ, Luther demanded over and above a further faith in one's subjective redemption, in spite of the difficulty which circumstances might present to the attaining of this assurance. It was something very different when the olden theologians taught that there were signs from which the good man's state of grace might be inferred with moral certainty, and that such signs were, for instance, the determination to commit no grievous sin, the desire to perform good works more especially such as were difficult, joy and peace of soul in God, and, above all, the consciousness of having done everything that was necessary for reconciliation with God. That, by such marks, it was "possible to arrive at the practical certainty of being in a state of grace" had been taught by Gabriel Biel, with whom Luther was acquainted.[2] Later on, the Council of Trent laid down as the Catholic doctrine, against the Lutheran theory of absolute faith in personal justification, "that no good Christian may doubt of the mercy of God, of the merits of Christ or the efficacy of grace," but that at the same time "no one can know with the certainty of faith which precludes all possibility of error that he has attained to God's grace."[3]

Luther's teaching was quite different.

He writes, for instance, in the larger Commentary on Galatians, which, as we know, he regarded next to his work "*De servo arbitrio*" as his principal legacy to posterity: "We must

[1] J. Mausbach, "Die Ethik des hl. Augustinus," 2, 1909, p. 98.
[2] Cp. Denifle-Weiss, *ibid.*, p. 742, n. 3. [3] Sess. VI. c. 9.

perceive and recognise it as certain that we are the temple of the Holy Ghost."[1] "The heart must be quite certain that it is in a state of grace and that it has the Holy Ghost."[2] It is true, he says, that, "because we feel the opposite sentiments of fear, doubt, sadness, etc., we fail to regard this as certain."[3] Yet do this we must: "We must day by day struggle ('*luctari*')[4] towards greater and greater certainty." We should exercise ourselves in the feeling of certainty, risk something to secure it; for it rests with our own self-acquired ability to believe ever firmly and steadfastly, even as we believe the truths of faith, that we are really justified. All depends on the practice and experience just referred to. "This matter, if it is to be achieved, cannot be learnt without experience. Everyone should therefore accustom himself resolutely to the persuasion that he is in a state of grace and that his person and deeds are pleasing [to God]. Should he feel a doubt, then let him exercise faith; he must beat down his doubts and acquire certainty, so as to be able to say: I know that I am pleasing [to God] and have the Holy Ghost, not on account of any worth or merits of my own, but on account of Christ, Who for our sakes submitted Himself to the law and took away the sins of the world. In Him I believe."[5] "The greatest art consists in this, that, regardless of the fact that we commit sin, we can yet say to the law: I am sinless."[6]

"And even when we have fought very hard for this, it will still cost us much sweat."

It is thus that Luther was led to speak from his own inner experience, of which we have plentiful corroboration. In the passage last quoted, he proceeds: "The matter of justification is difficult and delicate ('*causa iustificationis lubrica est*'), not indeed in itself, for in itself it is as certain as can be, but in our regard; of this I have frequent experience."[7]

We are already acquainted to some extent with the struggle against himself, and the better voices within him, which the unhappy man had to wage; this distress of soul remains to be treated of more in detail later (vol. v., xxxii.). It may, however, be pointed out here that he knew how to make this struggle part of his system; even when depressed by one's painful inability to reach this unshaken consciousness of salvation he still insists that one must feel certain; faced by doubts and fears on account of his sins, man must summon defiance to his aid, then, finally, he will come to rest secure of his personal salvation.

[1] "In Ep. ad. Gal.," 2, p. 161. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 164. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 165.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 166. Cp. above, p. 437, and vol. i., p. 385 ff. on this certainty of faith.
[5] "In Ep. ad. Gal.," 2, p. 166.
[6] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 201.
[7] "In Ep. ad. Gal.," 1, p. 101.

"We must cling with all sureness to the belief that not merely our office but also our person is well-pleasing to God."[1] It is true that men see, "how weak is the faith even of the pious. We would assuredly joyfully give thanks to God for His unspeakable gift could we but say with entire certainty: Yes, indeed, I am in a state of grace, my sin is forgiven me, I have the Spirit of Christ and I am the son of God. We feel, however, in ourselves emotions quite contrary, viz. fear, doubt, sadness, etc., hence we do not venture to make the assertion."[2] Others might infer from this the uselessness of all such vain efforts. Luther, however, would not be the man he is were he not to declare: On the contrary, "we must daily struggle more and more from uncertainty to certainty!" "Christ Himself," so he argues, "is quite certain in His Spirit that He is pleasing to God. . . . Hence we too, seeing that we have the Spirit of Christ, must be certain that we too stand in grace . . . on account of Him Who is certain."[3]

The last argument is the more noteworthy in that it demonstrates so well the vicious circle involved in Luther's conclusion. It amounts to this: In order to possess grace and reconciliation you must believe that you have grace and reconciliation. What guarantee has one of the certainty of this belief? Nothing but the inward consciousness to be evolved in the soul that it has indeed the grace of Christ which covers over all that is evil in it.

As Luther says, "If you are to be saved you must be so sure within yourself of the Word of grace, that even were all men to say the contrary, yea all the angels to deny it, you could yet stand alone and say: I know this Word is true."[4]

In practice, nevertheless, Luther was content with very little in the matter of this strength of certitude: "If I have Him [Christ], I am sure that I have everything. . . . What is still wanting in me is, that I cannot yet grasp it or believe it perfectly. So far as I am able now to grasp it and believe it, so far do I possess it, and if I stick to it this will go on increasing." But "still there remains an outward feeling of death, of hell, of the devil, of sin and of the law. Even though you feel this, it is merely a warfare that seeks to hinder you from attaining to life everlasting. . . . We should say: I believe in Christ Jesus, He is mine, and so far as I have Him and believe in Him, thus far am I pious."[5]—"Yet believe it I cannot."[6]

Luther, according to the legend which he evolved later when defending his doctrine of faith alone and Justification, had started from the intense inward need he felt of certainty of salvation, and with the object, as he says, of "finding a Gracious God." By his discovery regarding Justification,

[1] *Ibid.*, 2, p. 164. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 165.
[3] *Ibid.* [4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 17^2, p. 230.
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 33, p. 163; Erl. ed., 47, p. 369.
[6] Above, vol. iii., pp. 202 ff., 226.

so his admirers say, he at last found and retained for the rest of his life the sense of a merciful God. The strange thing is, however, that in his severe and protracted struggles of conscience he should, at a later date, have again arrived at this very question: "How can I find a Gracious God?"

He writes in 1527 to Melanchthon: "Like a wretched, reprobate worm I am molested by the spirit of sadness. . . . I desire nothing and thirst after nothing but a Gracious God." So greatly was he involved in inward contests that he says: "I am scarce able to drag on my existence; of working or writing I dare not think."[1] "Satan is busy," he exclaims to his friend Wenceslaus Link during these storms, "and would fain make it impossible for me to write; he wants to drag me down to him in hell. May God tread him under foot. Amen!"[2]

With very many of his followers the assurance of salvation failed to hold good in the presence of death. "We not only do not feel it [this assurance]," so he makes them say, "but rather the contrary." He admits the phenomenon and seeks to account for it; nay, in his usual way, he makes capital out of it. "In God's sight," he says, "the matter is indeed so [i.e. as promised by his doctrine of Justification], but not yet in our eyes and in those of the world; hence our fears still persist until we are released by death."[3] "Whoever feels weak let him console himself with this, that no one succeeds perfectly in this [in the attainment of certainty]." "That is one of the advantages enjoyed by heretics," he cries, "to lull themselves in security. . . . Nothing is more pestilential than security. Hence, when you feel weak in the faith you must rouse yourself; it is a sign of a good disposition and of the fear of God."[4]—Readers of Luther must be prepared for surprising statements.

It is true that he laments bitterly the increase of the fear of death among the new believers. In the case of epidemics he sees to his regret that everybody is "scared and takes to flight." Far greater than ever under Popery, so he says, "is now, under the strong light of the Evangel, men's fear of losing their life."[5] For this again he has an explanation to hand. When, for instance, the plague spread to Wittenberg in 1538 he wrote: Whence comes all this fear? "Formerly, under Popery, the people were not so much afraid. The reason is this: In Popery we trusted in the merits of the monks and of others, but now each one has to trust to and depend on himself."[6] Elsewhere, with the same object of reassuring himself and others, he says: The Evangel

[1] Oct. 27, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 109.
[2] Nov. 22, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 121.
[3] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 23, p. 264 *seq.*, in the exposition of Isaias, 1532, Denifle-Weiss, *ibid.*, p. 738, n. 1.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 143. Denifle-Weiss, *ibid.*, n. 2.
[5] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 188.
[6] To Wenceslaus Link, Oct. 26, 1539, "Briefe," 5, p. 219.

with its clear light of truth causes the holiness of God to be better perceived and thus leaves more room for the sense of fear. This he here reckons as an advantage over Popery, though, as a rule, his grievance against Catholicism had been that it excited fearsomeness by the gloomy legal spirit which prevailed in it and by its ignoring of God's mercy.—We shall not be far wrong if we regard such statements as dictated more by psychological than by theological considerations.

"It is a great thing," says Luther, referring to his doctrine of faith alone, "to lay claim to righteousness; then man dares to say: I am a son of God; whereas the state of grace affrights him. . . . Without practice ('*sine practica*') no one is able to repudiate righteousness-by-works and to preach faith alone."[1] He bewails "that we are too blind to be able to seize upon the treasure of grace. . . . We refuse to call ourselves holy," in spite of the certainty which faith brings us. Here our opponents, the Papists and the Sacramentarians, are not nearly so well off; at least they could not "quiet their conscience" as he could do by his method, because, owing to their works, they were always in doubt as to their own salvation. (At any rate, they were in no state of "pestilential security.") "They are always in doubt and wondering: Who knows whether it is really pleasing to God?" Yet they cling to works and "say Anathema to Jesus."[2]

"I have to labour daily," he says, "before I can lay hold on Christ"; he adds: "That is due to force of habit, because for so many years [in Popery] I looked upon Christ as a mere judge. It is an old, rotten tree that is rooted in me. . . . We have, however, now again reached the light; in my case this occurred when I was made a Doctor. . . . But know this, that Christ is not sent to judge and to punish, not to bite and to slay sinners as I used to fancy and as some still think."[3]

His extraordinary esteem for the new doctrine of the power of faith alone and the assurance of salvation, would furnish quite a riddle to one not aware of the constitution of his mind.

So greatly did he prize this doctrine, that, according to the testimony of Melanchthon, he referred to it all other articles of faith, even that of creation. "The article of the forgiveness of sins," he says, "is the foundation on which the article of the creation of the world rests."[4] "If we drop this article then we may well despair. The reason why heretics and fanatics [Papists and sectarians] go astray is simply their ignorance of this doctrine. Without it it is impossible to contend with Satan and with Popery, still less to be victorious."[5]—Thanks to such statements as these Luther's article of Justification came to be termed the article on which the Church stands or falls.

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 53.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 57 *seq.*
[3] "Luthers ungedruckte Predigten," ed. G. Buchwald, 3, Leipzig, 1885, p. 50.
[4] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 201.
[5] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 54.

The "Article on which the Church Stands or Falls": According to Modern Protestants.

Protestant scholars are far from sharing Luther's high regard for his dogma of Justification, and what they say throws a curious light on the fashion in which he deceived himself.

Amongst the Protestant voices raised in protest against this doctrine, the following deserve to be set on record. It is clear, says K. Hase, that the Catholic doctrine is more closely related to the "Protestant view now prevailing"; he avers, that the "Protestant theologians of our day, even those who are sticklers for the purity of Lutheranism, have described saving faith as that which works by love, quite agreeably to the scholastic conception of the '*fides formata*,' and have opposed to it a pretended Catholic dogma of Justification by good works."[1]

This well-known controversial writer when expressing it as his opinion that Luther's doctrine of Justification is now practically discarded, was not even at pains to exclude the conservative theologians of his party: "Döllinger[2] is quite right in charging the so-called 'old believers' amongst us with having fallen away from the Reformer's dogma of Justification as strictly and theologically defined."[3]

Thus oblivion seems to be the tragic fate of Luther's great theological discovery, which, if we are to believe what he says, was to him the light of his existence and his most powerful incentive in his whole work, and which figured so prominently in all his attacks on Rome. Was it not this doctrine which played the chief part in his belief in the utter corruption of the Church of earlier days, when, instead of prizing the grace of Christ, everything was made to depend on works, which had led to the ruin of Christendom, to the debasement of the clergy and to the transformation of the Pope into Antichrist?

The sole authority of Scripture, Luther's other palladium, had already suffered sadly since the Revolution period, and now the doctrine of Justification seems destined to a like fate. Albert Ritschl was pronouncing a severe censure when he declared, "that, amongst the differences of opinion prevalent in the ranks of the evangelical theologians, the recognition of two propositions [the sole authority of Scripture and Justification by imputation] was the minimum that could be expected of anyone who wished to be considered Evangelical."[4] For the fact is that the minimum required by Ritschl, is, according to the admission of Protestant critics themselves, frequently no longer held by these theologians.

Of the Lutheran doctrine of Justification here in question,

[1] K. Hase, "Hdbch. der prot. Polemik,"[4] p. 264.
[2] "Kirche und Kirchen," p. 428 f. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 269.
[4] "Gesch. des Pietismus," 1, Bonn, 1880, p. 38.

P. Genrich, a theologian, in his work on the idea of regeneration, says: "If we glance at the process of salvation as described in the evangelical theological handbooks of the 19th century, we may well be astonished at the extraordinary divergencies existing as regards both the conception of regeneration, and the place it is to occupy in the system of doctrine. There are hardly two theologians who entirely agree on the point."[1]—Of the practical side of the Lutheran doctrine in question the same writer states: "It is an almost universal complaint that this chief article of Evangelical faith is not of much use when it is a question of implanting and fostering piety, in the school, the church or in parish-work. Perhaps the preacher says a few words about it . . . the teacher, too, feels it his duty to deal with it in his catechetical instructions. . . . Justification by faith is extolled in more or less eloquent words as the treasure of the Reformation, because Church history and theology have taught us so to regard it. But at heart one is glad to be finished with it and vaguely conscious that all one said was in vain, and that, to the children or congregation Justification still remains something foreign and scarcely understood."[2] Genrich himself lays the blame on the later formularies of Lutheranism for the mistaken notion of a righteousness coming from without; yet the formularies of Concord surely voiced Luther's teaching better than the new exponents who are so disposed to tone it down.[3]

Of the actual theory of Luther, de Lagarde wrote some fifty years ago: "The doctrine of Justification [Luther's] is not the Evangel. . . . It was not the basic principle of the Reformation, and to-day in the Protestant Churches it is quite dead." De Lagarde did not allow himself to be misled by the flowery language concerning personal religious experience which is all that remains of Luther's doctrine in many modern expositions of it.[4]

"Research in the domain of New-Testament history and in

[1] "Die Lehre von der Wiedergeburt, die christl. Centrallehre, in dogmengeschichtl. und religionsgeschichtl. Beleuchtung," Leipzig, 1907, p. 229. [2] P. 120 f.

[3] On the Confession of Augsburg and Melanchthon's alterations in Luther's teaching, and on Melanchthon's own change of views, cp. O. Ritschl, "Der doppelte Rechtfertigungsbegriff in der Apologie der Augsburgischen Konfession" ("Zeitschr. f. Theol. u. Kirche," 1910, pp. 292–338).

[4] On de Lagarde see "Theol. Revue," 1908, col. 345. G. Esser, in his review there of Genrich's work, remarks of the alleged "religious experiences": "We hear the familiar rhapsodies concerning personal experience, religion that has to be lived and cannot be reduced to any formulas, and then again, experiences are discussed which have to be differentiated from others, vital experiences which must be accurately formulated, in short, a constant revolving in a circle, and a language that is always vague." Before this Esser had said: "What can the word Justification mean to those who have lost all idea of the supernatural and of grace, and have so changed the idea of 'faith' that nothing remains but a vague religious sentiment, a venture of the will to affirm the value of a higher world in the face of worldly wisdom."

that of the Reformation," says K. Holl, "has arrived at conclusions closely akin to de Lagarde's. . . . It has been made impossible simply to set the Protestant doctrine of Justification on the same level with the Pauline and with that of the Gospel of Jesus." Amongst the Protestant objections to the doctrine, he instances "its narrowness, which constitutes a limitation of the ethical insupportable to present-day tastes." He attempts to explain, or rather to amend, Luther's theory, so as to give ethics its due and to evade Luther's "paradox of a God," Who, though inexorable in His moral demands, Himself procures for the offender salvation and life. As the new dogma originally stood "both its Catholic opponents and the Anabaptists were at one in contending that Luther's doctrine of Justification could not fail to lead to moral laxity. Protestant theologians were not able to deny the weight of this objection." In point of fact it involves an "antinomy, for which there is no logical solution."[1]

The same author writes elsewhere concerning the assurance of salvation which, according to Luther, accompanies justifying faith: Luther, standing as he did for predestinarianism, "clearly abolished thereby the possibility of attaining to any certainty of salvation. All his life Luther allowed this remarkable contradiction to remain, not because it escaped his notice, but because he had no wish to remove it." Holl finds, moreover, in Luther's opinions on Predestination "the climax of the thoughts underlying his doctrine of Justification"; "the strength of [justifying] faith has to be tested by one's readiness to submit even to the sentence [of damnation]."[2]

In conclusion we may cite what W. Köhler says of the unreasonableness of Luther's denial of free-will, according to which either God or the devil sits astride man's back.

"With the rejection of man's pure passivity, or, as Luther says, of his being ridden by the Lord God, Luther's theology suffers a set-back, and the Catholic polemics of the 16th century receive a tardy vindication." Only owing to his "lucky lack of logic" did Luther steer clear of the disastrous moral consequences of such a view; "in practice" he still laid stress on good works in spite of the danger that the "feeling of security" and the idea of "sinlessness" might lead people "to sink into the mire." His doctrine, however, in itself leads "either to his usual thought: We are sinners after all, or to extravagant praise of the Divine mercy which flings 'black sheep' into the 'kingdom of grace.'"[3]

[1] "Die Rechtfertigungslehre im Lichte der Gesch. des Protestantismus," 1906 ("Sammlung . . . Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theol.," No. 45), pp. 2, 3, 42, 10, 16.

[2] "Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesungen über den Römerbrief mit bes. Rücksicht auf die Frage der Heilsgewissheit" ("Zeitschr. f. Theol. und Kirche," 1910, p. 245 ff.), pp. 287, 289.

[3] W. Köhler, "Katholizismus und Reformation," pp. 54–58. Of this description O. Clemen remarks in the "Zeitschr. f. KG.," 1909, p. 380: "Those pages have attracted special attention where Köhler shows that, in the Catholic criticism of Luther's doctrine of salvation, as unfair to ethical requirements, there lies a grain of truth."

Evangelical theologians generally are, however, full of admiration for the spirit in which Luther, thanks to his "inward experiences," convinced both himself and others of the certainty of Justification. His "experience of God" had at any rate made him capable of an "heroic faith" and, by his "risking all for God," he pointed out to the religion of the heart the true road to contentment for all future time. Luther's doctrine of Justification was the "final deepening of the sense of personal religion" (K. Holl).

The objections on this point, raised against Luther in his own camp, are all the more significant seeing he made all religion to consist in the cloaking of sin and the pacifying assurance of forgiveness; his Evangel had come as a "solace for troubled consciences"; it is "nothing else but forgiveness, and is concerned only with sin, which it blots out, covers over, sweeps away and cleanses so long as we live."[1] Thanks to it the long-forgotten true conception of the Kingdom of God had at last been happily brought again to light.

The title of a sermon of Luther's printed in 1525 expresses this idea as follows: "A Sermon on the Kingdom of Christ, which consists in the Forgiveness of Sins," etc. The words of Christ to the man sick of the palsy (Mat. ix. 2) form the subject: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." "These words," the preacher says, "indicate and sum up shortly what the Kingdom of Christ is." Since the Kingdom of Christ must be defined in relation to the question: "How must we behave with regard to God?" it cannot and must "not be regarded otherwise" than according to these words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; for "this is the chief thing, viz. that which can quiet the conscience." "Whence it follows that the Kingdom of Christ is so constituted that it contains nothing but comfort and forgiveness of sins." The chief fault of our reason is its "inclination, everywhere manifest, to forsake this faith and knowledge and to fall back upon works."

In Holy Scripture the object of the Kingdom of Christ is differently given. There it culminates in the glory of God. God's glorification is the real aim of Christ's coming, and must also be the supreme object of every believer. This does not in the least tally with that trumped-up holiness-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 355; cp. Erl. ed., 14^2, pp. 191, 195, 198 f., 205, 211 f.

by-works which Luther saw in Catholicism. This far higher, general, Catholic thought of God's glory pervades the first petitions of the prayer taught by our Saviour Himself in the Our Father: "Hallowed be Thy Name," etc.; only in the fifth petition do we hear of the forgiveness of sins for which, indeed, every human creature must implore. In the Our Father we acknowledge first of all our obligation to serve God with all our powers and strive to comply with our duty of glorifying His name. Hence Catholic religious instructions have never commenced with "the simple forgiveness of sin," with attempts to cloak it and to induce a fancied security in the sinner; their purpose has ever been to show that man is created to serve God and to honour Him, and that he can best do so by imitation and love of Christ.

This high object, the only one worthy of man and his spiritual powers, leads us to consider the doctrine of good works.

4. Good Works in Theory and Practice

Man is naturally disposed to believe that, built as he is, he must take his share in working out his salvation, if he be in sin, by preparing himself with God's help to enter the state of grace and then by seeking to retain it by means of good works.

The Church before Luther had taught, as she still does, and that on the strength of Holy Writ, that such co-operation on man's part, under God's assistance, is quite essential. Though the attaining to and the perseverance in the Divine sonship is chiefly the work of God, yet it is also man's, carried out with the aid of grace. She assured the faithful, that, according to the order graciously established by God and warranted by Scripture, all good works have their value for temporal and eternal reward. She sought indeed to kindle religious fervour by pointing to the promises held out, yet she had no wish to see man stop short at the thought of his reward, but rather expected him to rise to a more perfect love. Generosity, so she taught, was in no way impaired by the prospect of reward, on the contrary such hopes served as stepping-stones to facilitate the ascent.[1]

[1] On the teaching of antiquity see Bellarmin, "De iustificatione," 5, n. 10 *seq.*

Luther, owing to his implacable, personal aversion to any good works or human co-operation, laid violent hands on this so reasonable scheme of salvation.

Nature and Origin of the New Doctrine of Works.

Luther demanded that no importance should be set on co-operation by means of works in the business of Justification, because salvation was to be looked for from on high with simple faith and blind confidence. After reconciliation, too, man must not vainly fancy that he is capable of deserving anything by good works even by the greatest penances, sacrifices or deeds of love, but the doing of good must be allowed to follow simply as the effect of the Spirit of Christ now received, in those feelings towards God which Christ produces in us and in that love of our neighbour which is indispensable to human society.

Further light may be thrown on this standpoint of Luther's by some traits from his inward history and writings.

Here we cannot fail to notice echoes of his transition period, of his conflict with his brother-monks and those pious folk who were intent on good works and the heaping up of merits; of his subsequent remissness in his vocation and in the performance of his duties as a monk; finally of his later prejudice, largely a result of his polemics, against so many of the Church's public and private practices, of penance, of devotion and of the love of God. He closed his eyes to the fact, that he could have found no more effectual means of increasing amongst his followers the growing contempt for moral effort, neglect of good works and the gradual decline in religious feeling.

His estrangement from what he was pleased to call "holiness-by-works" always remained Luther's principal, ruling idea, just as it had been the starting-point of his change of mind in his monastic days.[1]

His chief discovery, viz. the doctrine of Justification, he was fond of parading as an attack upon works. It is only necessary to observe how persistently, how eagerly and instinctively he seizes the smallest pretext to launch in his sermons and writings a torrent of abuse on the Catholic works. It is as though some unseen hand were ever ready to open the sluice-gates, that, whether relevant or not to

[1] See vol. i., p. 118 ff.

the matter on hand, his anger might pour forth against fasting, and the ancient works of penance, against "cowls and tonsures," against the recitation of the Office in choir, rules, collections, pilgrimages and Jubilees, against taking the discipline, vows, veneration of the Saints and so many other religious practices.[1] In his habitual slanders on works, found on his lips from the beginning[2] to within a few weeks of his death, we can hardly fail to see the real link which binds together his whole activity. As against the Popish doctrine of works he is never weary of pointing out that his own doctrine of works is based on Christ; "it allows God to be our Lord God and gives Him the glory," a thought that pleased him all the more because it concealed the error under a mantle of piety; this deceptive idea already casts its shadow over the very first letter in his correspondence which touches on the new doctrine.[3]

Johann Eck could well answer: "Luther is doing us an injustice when he declares that we by our works exclude Christ as Mediator. . . . On the contrary, we teach, that, without Christ, works are nothing. . . . Therefore let him keep his lies to himself; the works that are done without faith, he may indeed talk of as he likes, but, as for ours, they proceed from the bottom rock of faith and are performed with the aid of Divine grace."[4]

Equally deceptive was the idea, so alluring in itself, that

[1] Cp. e.g., "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 683 f.; 10, 2, p. 126; Erl. ed., 22, p. 54; 28, p. 164; 53, p. 288. Vol. 15^2, p. 282, he speaks of the "lousy works," and, pointing out that Christ had become the fulfiller of the Law, says: "They [the Papists] boast of their works."—This is for him the real object of attack; he is determined to inveigh against the "*unus furor, velle per opera coram Deo agere,*" and says of the Catholics: "*opera quibus erga homines utendum est, offerunt Deo.*" "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 187; "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 396.

[2] "My struggle has been first of all against all trust in works, on which the world insists and struts." "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 382, Table-Talk.

[3] To George Spenlein, the Memmingen Augustinian, April 8, 1516, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 29: against the "*tentatio præsumptionis in multis et iis præcipue qui iusti et boni esse omnibus viribus student; ignorantes iustitiam Dei, quæ in Christo est nobis effusissime et gratis donata, quærunt in se ipsis tamdiu operari bene, donec habeant fiduciam standi coram Deo, veluti virtutibus et meritis ornati; quod est impossibile fieri.*" Cp. Weim. ed., 1, p. 347; "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 236, where he speaks against the "*affectus propriæ iustitiæ*" and declares that the sense of good works performed led men to fall. P. 347—237: the wish to have remained always pure was simply foolish, etc.

[4] "Opera," Pars II. Ingolstadtii, 1531, p. 95: "*Calumniatur Ludderus. quod per opera sua Christum excludant mediatorem,*" etc.

Luther's doctrine of works bore the stamp of true freedom, viz. the freedom of the Gospel. Here, again, we can only see a new expression of his profound alienation from works and from the sacrifice entailed by self-conquest. He is desirous, so he says, of hoisting on the shield the freedom of the man who is guided solely by God's Spirit. But will this not serve as an excuse for weakness? Here we seem to find an after-effect of that late-mediæval pseudo-mysticism which had once been a danger to him, which went so far as to demand of the righteous complete indifference to works, and, that, in language apparently most affecting and sublime.

These two thoughts, that Christ would thus be restored to His place of honour and man secure evangelical freedom, were a great temptation to many hearers of Luther's call to leave the Catholic Church. In all great intellectual revolutions there are always at work certain impelling ideas, either true ones which rightly prove attractive, or false ones which yet assume the appearance of truth and thus move people's minds. Without the intervention of the two thoughts just referred to, the spread of the religious movement in the 16th century is not fully to be explained.

How many of the apostles and followers of the new preaching were really moved by these two thoughts must even then have been difficult to determine. Noble and privileged souls may not have been wanting amongst them. The masses, however, introduced so earthly an element into these better and pious ideals that the ideals only remained as a pretext, a very effective pretext indeed, to allege for their own pacification and in extenuation of their other aims. Great watchwords, once put forward, often serve as a useful cloak for other things. In this respect the demand for the freedom of the Gospel proved very popular. The age clamoured to be set free from bonds which were proving irksome, for instance, to mention but one point, from exorbitant ecclesiastical dues and spiritual penalties. Hence evangelical freedom was readily accepted as synonymous with deliverance, and, in time, ceased to be "evangelical" at all.

That Luther's doctrine of works and of the freedom bestowed by Christ the fulfiller of the Law, embodied a great moral danger, is now recognised even by Protestants.

"How terribly dangerous," a Protestant Church-historian says, "is that 'To be for ever and ever secure of life in Christ' in the sense in which Luther understands it! We Protestants are merely toning it down when we find in it simply the consciousness of being supported by God; to Luther it is much more . . . it is a feeling of spiritual mastery." The author quotes as descriptive of Luther's attitude the characteristic watchword from his writing "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen": "The Christian is so far exalted above everything by faith that he becomes spiritually lord over all, for there is nothing that can endanger his salvation." To these we may append Luther's spoken words: "This is Christian freedom . . . to have no need of any work in order to attain to piety and salvation"; a Christian may say: I possess "such a Saviour that I need have no fear of death, and am certain of life for ever and ever; I can snap my fingers at the devil and his hell, and am no longer called upon to tremble before the wrath of God."[1] The same writer also points out, that, according to Luther, this happy believer "remains for all this inwardly ('*intrinsece*') a sinner and is righteous only outwardly ('*extrinsece*')." From such teaching as this respect for works was bound to suffer: the question of "religion and morality," whether from the point of view of religion in the process of salvation or from the point of view of morals in social action, could not be satisfactorily solved thereby. "In both cases morality comes short. Theologically no sufficient bulwark is erected against misinterpretation." "Luther had trouble enough, and through his own fault, in stemming the incroachments of immorality."

More strongly, and with the frankness usual in the polemics of his day, Willibald Pirkheimer, Luther's former friend, voices the same thought when he speaks of the "not evangelical, but rather devilish freedom" which, owing to the preaching of the new "evangelical truth," had made itself so "shockingly" felt amongst so many apostates, both male and female, and had induced him, after long hesitation, to betake himself back to the Catholic fold.[2]

Before quoting the opinion of other critics of the preaching against works in his own time, we may give Luther the chance to describe the extent of his opposition to the olden doctrine.

He is determined, as he says as early as 1516, "to root out utterly the stupid, fleshly affectation that trusts in such works."[3] "Many graces and merits," so he taught even then, "lead man from God; we are so ready to rely on good works, more than on

[1] W. Köhler, "Denifles Luther," p. 42, referring to Luther's Works, Erl. ed., 32, p. 261.

[2] From Kilian Leib, "Verantwortung des Klosterstandes," fol. 170′. Cp. Döllinger, "Reformation," 1, p. 5, 33; 2nd ed., p. 587.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 349; "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 239.

God Himself" ; yet we should rather, "in absolute nakedness, pay homage to God's mercy from the bottom of our heart."[1] "The multitude of our sins must not arouse despair, what should make us distrustful is any striving after good works" ; we "ought rather to take refuge in the mercy of God." The sense of good works is our ruin, for it induces in us "a feeling of self-righteousness."[2] The latter words portray his own psychological state at that time. It was these lax ideas that led to his quarrel with the Observantines amongst his brethren and with the so-called "Little Saints." Here also we have an echo from the world of thought already described as the real starting-point of his sad development.

During this crucial period of his mental growth he preached in 1515 on the glad tidings of the Gospel ; it was "glad" because it taught us "that the law had already been fulfilled by Christ, so that it was no longer necessary for us to fulfil it, but only, by faith, to hang it about the Man who had fulfilled it and become conformed to Him, because Christ is our Righteousness, Holiness and Redemption."[3]

Later he comes to speak still more strongly. He fully admitted it was natural to all men, himself included, to turn to good works in trouble of conscience ; it was beyond reason not to rest on them,[4] yet, according to him, in solacing our conscience we must pay no heed either to sin or to works, but put our whole trust in the righteousness of Christ ; we must, to quote him literally, "set up grace and forgiveness, not only against sin, but also against good works."[5] It is true that he protests that he has no intention to exclude works (other statements of his in favour of good works will be quoted in due time), yet he abases them to a level which fails to explain why Christ and the Apostles so earnestly recommended them and promised an eternal reward for their performance. Luther assures us that good works form "worldly righteousness" ; that love of our neighbour is enjoined for the welfare of society and because we live together ; yet he steadfastly condemns as a "shameful delusion," the view "that works are of any value to righteousness in the sight of God."[6]

Who of his contemporaries could deny that Luther preached a wonderfully simple and easy road to "life everlasting" ? If this and the "forgiveness of sins" were to cost no more than he insists upon elsewhere, viz. "that you hear the Word and believe it when you have heard it ; if you believe it, then you have it without any trouble, expense, delay or pains ; thus does the Gospel of Christ and the Christian teaching do everything with a few short words, for it is God's own Word."[7]

Worthy of notice in connection with his ideas of evangelical freedom (see above, p. 453, and vol. ii., p. 27 ff.) is the significant

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 348=238. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 347=236.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 105.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 14^2, p. 212 f.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 213. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 221.
[7] *Ibid.*, 6^2, p. 157, Hauspostille. Cp. above, p. 438, n. 9.

use he makes of the term applied in the New Testament to all Christians, viz. members of a "royal priesthood," which Luther takes as meaning that all believers have a certain supremacy over sin.

As every Christian, so he teaches, by virtue of the universal priesthood possesses authority to "proclaim the Gospel," as everyone, "man, woman or maid," is qualified to "teach" who "knows how to and is able," so the "Spirit of Christ encourages" all without exception and makes of each one "a great Lord and King of all." But, "where works are preached, there the right of primogeniture is taken from us," and this privilege of "royal and priestly dignity disappears completely." Sometimes the devil tries to force us to sin, for "he is a servant and has his own way. If he forces me to sin then I run to Christ and invoke His help; then he is ashamed. The more he does, the greater his shame. Thus this power is omnipotent. 'Thou hast set all things under his feet' [Ps. viii. 8], we are told. 'We shall judge the angels,' says St. Paul [1 Cor. vi. 3]. That is our right of primogeniture which we must ascribe, not to ourselves, but to Christ. But when Christ has cleansed you, then you do what is good, not for yourself [by gaining merit], but for others."—Such a doctrine he could truly say the Papists failed to understand. But he adds further: They cannot even pray; "with their prayers they merely mock God."[1]

If all the faithful are, as the new Evangel teaches, by virtue of their right of primogeniture great Lords and Kings, then that fear of God's chastisements is no longer justified which the ancient Church had always put forward as one of the motives for performing good works and leading a moral life. On the contrary, we are not to open our hearts too readily to such fear. Luther's injunctions concerning fear of the Judge go to form a further chapter in the psychological and historical criticism of his doctrine of works. Here we see plainly his instinctive aversion to the views and practice of the olden Church.

The Catholic doctrine of fear had been expressed with wonderful simplicity in the "Imitation of Christ," already widely read in the years previous to the Reformation: "It is well, my son, that so long as love avails not to restrain thee, fear of eternal punishment should at least affright thee from evil. Whoever disregards fear will not long be able to persevere in good."—"Consider how thou mayest answer for thyself before the stern judge": "Now thy labour is still fruitful, now thy contrition still cleanses and makes satisfaction." "At the day of judgment

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 432, in the notes taken of a sermon of 1524.

the man who has mortified his flesh here below will rejoice more than he who has indulged it in luxury."—The "Imitation" desires, however, that fear should be allied with confidence and love. "Look on Me," it makes Christ say, "let not thy heart be troubled nor afraid. Believe in Me and trust in My mercy. When thou thinkest thou art far from Me, I am often closest to thee." "If thou but trust in the Lord," it says again, "strength will be given thee from above." "Thou hast no need to fear the devil if thou art armed with the cross of Christ." Nor do we meet in this book with any trace of that frozen fear which Luther represented as prevalent in the monasteries, on the contrary it insists no less on love: "In the cloister no one can persevere unless he be ready for the love of God to humble himself from the bottom of his heart."

In order to supply a suitable background for his new doctrine, Luther made out Catholic antiquity to have fostered both in theory and in practice a craven fear, of which in reality it knew nothing at all. By excluding the elements of trust and love, he reduced Catholic life to the merest state of fear, as though this had actually been the sphere in which it moved; he charges it with having cultivated that servile fear which would at once commit sin were there no penalty attached; he also finds in monastic life an element of excitement and confusion which, as our readers already know, was really peculiar to his own personal temperament at one time.

Far more characteristic than such calumnies is his own attitude to that fear of God's judgments which is just and indispensable.

Not as though, generally, he did not recommend and praise the "fear of God." This, however, falls beside the mark since such a fear may exist without any adverting to the punishments of the judge, and, as Luther himself puts it, not altogether incorrectly, is more "an awe that holds God in honour and which is always expected of the Christian, just as a good child should fear his father."[1] This is the "*timor reverentialis*," to use the earlier theological term. But to the actual fear of the Divine judgments as an expiatory and saving motive, Luther gives no place whatever; neither in the justification of the sinner, seeing that he makes faith the one condition for its attainment, or subsequent to justification and in the state of grace, because there all that obtains is confidence in the covering over of sin by grace, while the state of grace, in his opinion, of its own nature necessarily works what is good. The Law and its threats, is, in his opinion, useful "for revealing sin" in order that, knowing this, "grace may be sought and obtained"; "thus the Law works fear and wrath, whereas grace works hope and mercy."[2]

Fear, in reality, is contemptible; it "is there because sin prevails," hence it is not found in the pious, not even in Old-Testament times.[3] "Let us," he cries, "cast at our feet all free-

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 349.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 369, Thesis 16.
[3] Cp. "Opp. lat. exeg.," 9, p. 360; 10, p. 159; 11, p. 121.

will. . . . Nature and free-will cannot stand before God, for they fear lest He should fall upon them with His club. . . . Where the Holy Spirit does not whisper to the heart the Evangelical promises, man looks upon God as a devil, executioner, task-master and judge. . . . To the devil with such holiness!"[1] The above is no mere momentary outburst; it is a theological system and the expression of his deep psychological prejudice. We are carried back to his monastic days and to the theory which fear led him to invent to allay his own personal agitation, but to which he could hold fast only by dint of doing violence to himself.

When he came to see, that, to preserve the people from moral degradation, fear of the Judgments of God had to be preached, he urged that it should be emphasised and declared it quite essential. This he did particularly in his instructions for the Visitation of the Saxon Electorate, which accordingly contain what is practically a repudiation of his teaching. The reasonable and wholesome fear of the judge, which he would have preached to the "simple people" for the moving of their hearts, in spite of all his protests has surely a right and claim to work on the minds not merely of the "simple" but even of the educated, and accordingly to be urged even by the theologians.

Luther's attitude here was as ambiguous as elsewhere, for instance, in the case of his whole doctrine of grace and justification, no less than in its premises, viz. unfreedom, concupiscence and original sin. Everywhere we meet with contradictions, which make it almost impossible to furnish any connected description of his doctrinal system.

Augustine as the Authority for the New Doctrine of Works.

We have an example of Luther's want of theological acumen in his appeal to Augustine in support of his doctrine of works.

In order to understand this we must recollect that, from the beginning, Luther had described his new theology as simply that of Augustine the great Father of the Church. Of Augustine's—of whom he said in 1516 that he had not felt the slightest leaning towards him until he had "tumbled on" his writings[2]—he had merely read in 1509 a small number of works, and he became acquainted with what were for him the more important of this Father's writings only after he had already largely deviated from the Church's

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 397; Erl. ed., 36, p. 6 f.

[2] To Spalatin, Oct. 16, 1516, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 64: "*qui (Augustinus) apud me, antequam in libros eius incidissem, ne tantillum quidem favoris habuit.*" Other Augustinians made more account of this Saint, popularly regarded as their founder.

doctrine.[1] Even later, his knowledge of Augustine was scanty. He was, however, as a monk, fond of identifying his own new doctrine of grace with Augustine's ;[2] he tried to enlist the help of his colleague, Amsdorf, by a present of St. Augustine's works ; in this he was completely successful.[3] On May 18, 1517, he wrote to Lang on the state of things at Wittenberg, the triumphant words already quoted : " Our theology and St. Augustine are making happy progress with God's help and are now paramount at the University," etc.[4] From that time forward he was fond of saying, that Augustine was opposed " to Gabriel Biel, Thomas of Aquin and the whole crowd of Sententiaries, and would hold the field against them because he was grounded on the pure Gospel, particularly on the testimony of Paul."[5] To what extent he really in his heart believed this of Augustine must remain a moot question.

" Luther," says Julius Köstlin, one of the best-known authorities on Luther's theology, " could, indeed, appeal to St. Augustine in support of the thesis that man becomes righteous and is saved purely by God's gracious decree and the working of His Grace and not by any natural powers and achievements [which is the Catholic doctrine], but not for the further theory that man is regarded by God as just purely by virtue of faith . . . nor that the Christian thus justified can never perform anything meritorious in God's sight but is saved merely by the pardoning grace of God which must ever anew be laid hold of by faith " [i.e. the specifically Lutheran theses on faith and works]. The same author adds : " Only gradually did the fundamental difference between the Augustinian view, his own and that of Paul become entirely clear to Luther."[6]

When this happened it is hard to say ; at any rate, his strictures on Augustine and the Fathers in his lectures of 1527 on the 1st Epistle of St. John, and in his later Table-Talk prove, that, as time went on he had given up all idea of

[1] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, pp. 75, 109 f.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[3] " Stud. und Krit.," 1878, p. 698 ; Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 134.

[4] " Briefwechsel," 1, p. 100 : " *Theologia nostra et S. Augustinus prospere procedunt*," etc.

[5] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 137; here it is first stated : " Luther's theology was regarded by him and his friends as simply that of the great Father Augustine."

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

finding in these authorities any confirmation of his doctrine on faith alone and works.[1]

However his convictions may have stood, he certainly, in his earlier writings, claimed Augustine in support of his doctrine of the absence of free-will, particularly on account of a passage in the work "*Contra Julianum*," which Luther repeats and applies under various forms.[2] There can, of course, be no question of St. Augustine's having actually been a partisan, whether here or elsewhere, of the Lutheran doctrine of the "enslaved will." "These and other passages from St. Augustine which Luther quotes in proof of the unfreedom of the will really tell against him; he either tears them from their context or else he falsifies their meaning."[3] He is equally unfair when, in his Commentary on Romans and frequently elsewhere, he appeals to this Doctor of the Church in defence of his opinion, that, after baptism, sin really still persists in man,[4] likewise in his doctrine of concupiscence in general,[5] where he even fails to quote his texts correctly. He alters the sense of Augustine's words with regard to the keeping of God's commandments, the difference between venial and mortal sin, and the virtues of the just.[6] Denifle, after patiently tracing Luther's patristic excursions, angrily exclaims: "He treats Augustine as he does Holy Scripture."[7]

Deserving of notice, because it explains both his repeated quotations from Augustine and his advocacy of the motive of fear, is a lengthy admonition of 1531 couched in the form of a letter on the defence of the new doctrine of faith alone and of works. The letter was written by Melanchthon to Johann Brenz, but it had the entire approval of Luther, who even appended a few words to it.[8] While clearly throwing overboard Augustine, it is nevertheless anxious to retain him.

The letter discussed the objections alleged by Brenz, the influential promoter of the innovations in Suabia, against Luther's doctrine of Justification, particularly as formulated in the Augsburg Confession, and against Melanchthon's appeal therein to St. Augustine; Brenz urged that some effort on man's part certainly intervened in the work of pardon. In the reply Augustine is practically given up. Brenz is told that he is wrong in clinging to Augustine's fancy ("*hæres in Augustini imaginatione*") which puts our righteousness in the fulfilment of the Law. "Avert your eyes from such a regeneration of man and from the Law and look only to the promises and to Christ. . . . Augustine is not in agreement with the doctrine of Paul [read 'of Luther'], though he comes nearer to it than do the School-

[1] Cp. Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 3, p. 364.

[2] August., "*Contra Jul.*," 1, 2, c. 8, n. 23. Cp. Denifle-Weiss, 1^2, pp. 486 ff., 511, 512, 513.

[3] Thus Denifle-Weiss, *ibid.*, p. 508. [4] *Ibid.*, pp. 460 f., 467.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 469. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 472. [7] *Ibid.*

[8] Melanchthon and Luther to Brenz, end of May, 1531, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 9, p. 18.

men. I quote Augustine as in entire agreement (*prorsus ὁμόψηφος*), although he does not sufficiently explain the righteousness of faith; this I do because of public opinion concerning him." What he means is: Since Augustine is universally held in such high esteem, and has been instanced by us, for this reason I too quote him as though on this point he agreed entirely with Paul, which, as a matter of fact, is not the case.[1]

Melanchthon next deals more closely with the new idea of righteousness. He hints that, in the Augsburg documents, he had not been able to speak as he was now doing to Brenz,[2] although, so he persuades himself, he was really saying the same then as now. He gives Brenz what, compared with Luther's blunt words at the end, is a very polished rendering of the Wittenberg doctrine. "Dismiss the fancy of Augustine entirely from your mind," he concludes, "and then you will readily understand the reason [why only faith can justify]; I hope that then you will find in our 'Apologia' [of the Confession] some profit, though in it I was obliged to express many things with that timidity which can only be understood in struggles of conscience ('*in certaminibus conscientiarum*'). It is essential to bring to the ears of the people the preaching of the Law and of penance, but the above true doctrine of the Gospel must not be lost sight of."—To retire with his holed theology into the mystic obscurity of the "struggles of conscience" was an art that the pupil had learnt from his master.

Luther, unlike Melanchthon, was no adept on the tight-rope; in his postscript he bluntly dismisses the Law, penance and all works so far as they are intended to assist in sanctification as Brenz like the Papists thought; his cry is "Christ alone." Not even in "love or the gifts that follow from it," does our salvation lie; in this work nothing within ourselves plays any part, therefore "away with all reference to the Law and to works," away too, with the thought of "Christ as Rewarder!" "In the stead of every '*qualitas*' in myself, whether termed faith or love, I simply set Jesus Christ and say: This is my righteousness, this is my '*qualitas*' and my '*formalis iustitia*,' as they call it." Thus only had he everything in himself, thus only did Christ become the "way, the truth and the life" to him, without "effecting this in me from without; in me, not, however, through me, He Himself must remain, live and speak." Of Augustine Luther indeed says nothing in this passage, but he could not have expressed more strongly the purely mechanical conception of justification, nor have rejected more emphatically every human work, even man's co-operation under grace.

With this decision Brenz in his letters to Luther and Melanchthon declared himself satisfied, likewise with the instruction received, "which was worthy of a place in the canon of Scripture."

[1] Thus Wrampelmeyer, editor of Cordatus's "Tagebuch," on the copy of the letter in Cordatus, p. 383.

[2] For the course pursued by Melanchthon when drawing up the portion of the Confession in question, see vol. iii., p. 329 f.

It is unfortunate, however, that Conrad Cordatus, one of Luther's favourite pupils, when consigning to his Notes the joint declarations of Luther and Melanchthon, should have registered a protest against "Philip's innovations." His quarrel with Philip Melanchthon on the doctrine of Justification was one of the many phases of the dissensions called forth in the Protestant camp by the "article on which the Church stands or falls."[1]

Against any citation of St. Augustine the Lutheran theologians and preachers in Pomerania protested during the negotiations for the formula of Concord. By thus falsely alleging this Father, they said in their declaration at the Synod of Stettin in 1577, a formidable weapon was placed in the hands of their Catholic opponents of which they had not failed to avail themselves against the Protestants; they were also assuming the responsibility for a public lie: "Augustine's book '*De spiritu et littera*' teaches concerning Justification what the Papists teach to-day." In the following year they declared against the form of the "first '*Confessio Augustana*,' as published at Wittenberg in 1531 by Luther and our other fathers," again on the ground that "there Augustine's '*consensus*' is alleged."[2] In Mecklenburg the strictures of the Synods of Pomerania were accepted as perfectly warranted. David Chytræus, Professor at Rostock and once a member of Melanchthon's household, stated about that time, that Erhard Schnepf, the Würtemberg theologian, who was of the same way of thinking as Johann Brenz, had declared in 1544, i.e. during Luther's lifetime, in a public discourse at Tübingen, that in the whole of Augustine there was not a syllable concerning the righteousness of Christ being imputed to us by faith.[3] When Chytræus adds that Augustine "was ὁμόψηφος with the Papists," it is very likely that he was countering the opposite use of this same word by Melanchthon in the passage mentioned above; the latter's epistle to Brenz had then already been printed.

The real teaching of St. Augustine is best seen in his anxiety that man should co-operate with all the power furnished by the assistance of God's grace, in the attainment of his salvation. The wholesome fear of God he reckons first, after the necessary condition of faith has been fulfilled. Of the acts of moral preparation (fear, hope, love, penance and good resolutions) for obtaining the grace of

[1] "Tagebuch," ed. Wrampelmeyer, p. 385: "*Hactenus Philippus ille cum sua novitate.*" The differences between Cordatus and Melanchthon related to the doctrine of Justification under another aspect. On these dissensions, see Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 445 ff.; on the want of unity on Justification generally amongst Luther's pupils, see Döllinger, "Die Ref.," 3, pp. 372–591.

[2] Döllinger, *loc. cit.*, p. 367 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 370.

Justification from God, he regards fear as the element, without which a man "never, or hardly ever," reaches God.[1] To show the necessity of works and a good intention he appeals to texts in the Epistle of St. James rejected by Luther, where we read: "You see that by works a man is justified and not by faith only" (ii. 24). Here he goes so far as to suggest that James probably spoke so explicitly of works because the passages on faith in Paul's Epistles had been misunderstood by some.[2]

"We say," so he teaches in opposition to Luther concerning the destruction of sin in man by baptism, "that baptism brings the remission of all sins, and not merely erases them, but actually removes them ('*auferre crimina non radere*'); the roots of sin do not remain in the corrupt flesh, so that the sins have not to grow again and be again cut off like the hair of our heads."[3]

The righteousness which is bestowed on the sinner is, in his view, no imputed righteousness of Christ but a personal righteousness actually residing in man. Hence he explains that the "Justice of God," referred to in Rom. iii. 21 f., is not that whereby God is just, but that with which He provides the impious man when justifying him; in the same way the "faith of Christ" mentioned there is "not a faith by which Christ believes, but the faith that is in us." "Both are ours, but they are ascribed to God and Christ because bestowed on us by the Divine favour."[4] The righteousness bestowed on us is "that which Adam lost by sin"; Adam's righteousness was a quality inherent in him, not the imputed righteousness of Christ.[5] It is also the same grace which is infused into adults in Justification and which children receive in baptism.[6] By sanctifying grace the soul is inwardly ennobled, "for when nature's Creator justifies it by grace, it ceases to be an object of horror and becomes a thing of beauty."[7] The Holy Ghost dwells in us and "God gives us therewith no less a gift than Himself."[8] Thus "as the soul is the life of the body, so God is the life of the soul."[9]

Our state of grace may, however, be dimmed, and that not only by lack of faith; for it has its enemies in imperfections and sins. "Though our righteousness is a true one, yet in this life the forgiveness of sins plays a greater part than the perfection of virtue."[10] "If our will turns against God, we separate ourselves

[1] "De catechizandis rudibus," c. 5.
[2] Lib. 83, quæst., q. 76; "Enarr. 2 in psalm. 31," n. 3; "De fide et operibus," c. 14, n. 21.
[3] "Contra II epist. Pelag.," 1, c. 13, n. 26.
[4] "De spiritu et littera," c. 9.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] "De peccato et merito," 1, 9.
[7] "De Trinitate," 15, 8, 14.
[8] "De fide et symbolo," c. 9.
[9] "In Psalm. LXX," serm. 2, n. 3.
[10] "De civitate Dei," 19, 27.

from Him, and the light which enlightened us during His presence at once changes into darkness."[1] In order to prevent any such danger on the part of the will, Augustine frequently reminds his readers of such exhortations of our Saviour, as: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

Man is also spurred to be faithful, so he says, by the merit of good works. "God Himself has become our debtor," so he said when preaching to the assembled faithful; "not as though He had received something from us, but because He has promised what He pleased. To a man we speak differently and say: You are my debtor because I have given to you. To God we say, on the contrary: Thou art my debtor because Thou hast made me promises; . . . in this sense therefore we may urge on God our demands and say: Give what Thou hast promised, for we have done what Thou didst command."[2]

To recommend the practice of good works out of love of God and zeal for His honour, and to heap up merit for heaven, is the purpose of long and eloquent portions of the literary legacy which Augustine left behind him. The whole of the book "*De fide et operibus*" and long chapters of his "*Enchiridion*" were written with this object. In the former work he introduces, for instance, the Judgment scene described by our Saviour, and says: "Those who are placed on the left hand of Christ, according to this passage (Mat. xxv. 41), He will reproach not for not having believed in Him, but for not having performed good works. How could this be true if we were to attain to salvation without keeping the commandments or by faith alone ('*per solam fidem*'), which without works is dead? Christ wished to impress on us that no one can promise himself eternal life by a dead faith, minus works. Hence He causes all the nations who have received the same spiritual food [of faith] to be separated out before Him, and clearly it is such as have believed but have not performed good works who will say: When did we see Thee suffering this and that [and did not minister to Thee]? They had fancied that by a dead faith they could attain to everlasting life."[3]

The voice of the bishop of Hippo, supported by the whole Church whose doctrine was also his, was re-echoed by later ecclesiastical writers who made greedy use of his works; nor were the exhortations of the Fathers without result among the faithful. Later Fathers frequently discourse on the testimony of Holy Writ in favour of works just as Augustine had done; the following texts were frequently adduced: "God will render to every man according to his works"; "Not the hearers of the law are just before God,

[1] "Super Genesi ad litt.," 8, 12.
[2] Sermo 158, c. 2. Similarly "In Psalm." LXXXIII and CIX.
[3] "De fide et op.," c. 10.

but the doers of the law shall be justified" ; "The Son of Man will come and render to every man according to his works" (Rom. ii. 6, 13 ; Mat. xvi. 27).

Gregory the Great, who trained himself on Augustine's model, states, in a homily to his congregation : "Possibly we may say to ourselves : I believe, hence I shall be saved. This is only true when we prove our faith by our works." "Then are we true believers when we execute in work what we confess in our faith."[1]

A faith proved by works was the sign manual of the Middle Ages. Nor did Luther and his preachers ever complain of the lack of works of piety in the days previous to the Reformation, although they thought it their duty to blame the spirit in which those works had been performed.

What, however, did Luther and his followers think of the moral consequences of the preaching directed against all merit of good works ?

The New Doctrine of Works in Practice, as Judged by Lutheran Opinion in the 16th Century.

We have already listened to Luther's own complaints and those of many of his contemporaries concerning the parlous state of morals amongst the adherents of the new teaching, and the almost entire absence of any practical fruits of piety under the amended Gospel.[2] Since the mainstay of the innovations was the doctrine of grace and works it is necessary to seek out more closely the connection between the new doctrine of works and the sad moral results of the revolt against the Church. Luther himself makes no odds about referring to these results and their real cause : "The surer we are of the freedom won by Christ, the more indolent do we become" ; "because we teach that man attains to grace without any works whatever, we grow lazy" ; he almost wishes "that the old teaching again came into its own."[3] Only his shortsightedness and the psychological effect of his passionate temper prevented his foreseeing the inevitable consequences of his theory of the all-sufficiency of faith and of his reckless denunciation of the regard for commandments and works previously obtaining. How little his own frequent exhortations to lead a moral life and to

[1] "Homil. 29 in Evang."

[2] See particularly above, pp. 195–218.

[3] Cp. p. 212.

perform works of Christian charity (see below, p. 472 ff.) could prevail against the fell charm of the doctrine of Evangelical freedom, remained hid from his eyes, until the extent of the moral corruption and the growing savagery of the people in certain regions began to frighten him and to cause him to long ardently for the end of the world and even to predict its imminence.

There was some truth in what he said, viz. that, as the world was constituted, if one preached faith (i.e. the justifying faith so much belauded by him) works went to the wall, and that, on the other hand, "faith" must needs perish wherever works were preached.[1] The two were indeed self-exclusive, however much, in his recommendation of works, he might affirm the contrary.

This is not the place to point out anew the dangers inherent in Luther's doctrine of justification, for we have already seen the necessary result of one of its presuppositions, viz. the denial of free-will, and how right Erasmus was when he urged against Luther, that, on this assumption, all laws and commandments, even those of Scripture, were simply superfluous. A Protestant has aptly remarked, that, in the last instance, "the difference between good and evil becomes quite illusory"; we might well ask: "How can we feel ourselves responsible towards God . . . if we do nothing and God works all in all?" Luther himself even goes so far as to make Scripture teach that "the will not only desires nothing good, but is even unaware of how much evil it does and of what good is."[2] Since the imputed merits of Christ are, as a matter of fact, merely like a screen set up

[1] He says in a frequently misquoted paragraph ("Werke," Erl. ed., 18^2, p. 352 f.) in so many words: "The world ever remains the same; either it exalts faith wrongly [as do the 'secure pseudo-Christians' on his side whose 'faith is not rooted aright,' p. 351] or it wishes to be over-holy but without faith [like the Papists]. If we discourse on faith and grace, then no one will perform good works; if we insist on works, then no one will have anything to do with faith; few indeed are those who keep to the true middle course and even pious Christians find it difficult."—This was certainly quite true of the piety he taught.

[2] Thus M. Staub, "Willensfreiheit . . . bei Luther," Zürich, 1894, p. 39, 2 ff. Cp. the passage in Luther's book "De servo arbitrio," Weim. ed., 18, p. 697; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 238: "*Quid potest robustius contra liberum arbitrium dici, quam ipsum esse nihili, ut non modo non velit bonum, sed nec sciat quidem, quantum faciat mali et quid sit bonum.*" This he proves from the words of Christ on the cross: "They know not what they do"! "*An est hic obscuritas in ullo verbo? . . . Hoc clarissimum verbum Christi,*" etc.

in front of the soul, many might naturally feel tempted to extenuate and excuse all that the sin which persists in man still does behind it.

To appreciate the peculiar nature of the danger it is necessary to take Luther's teaching, not by itself, but in conjunction with the mental atmosphere of the day. We must of course take it for granted that many of his followers refrained from putting into practice Luther's teaching in its entirety, for instance, his peculiar doctrine of the lack of free-will. Many well-disposed Lutherans whose good faith was above suspicion, doubtless remained more or less outside the influence of such ideas, were actuated by good religious motives and expressed them in Christian works. Assisted by the grace of God, which is at the disposal of all men of good-will, they, all unknowingly, were gaining merit in heaven. On the other hand, the ill-disposed, those who sought the enjoyments of life—and of such there were thousands—found a sanction in the Wittenberg doctrine for neglecting good works. In the case of many the "joyful tidings" could not under the circumstances of the age be expected to produce any other result. We have only to think of what was going on all about; of the prevalent yearning after release from irksome bonds; of the unkindly feeling towards rulers, both ecclesiastical and secular; of the seething discontent among the peasants on account of their oppression and toilsome duties; of the spirit of independence so vigorous in the towns; of the boundless ambition of the mighty; of the influence, sometimes sceptical, sometimes immoral, of Humanism, and of the worldliness and degradation of so many of the clergy and monks, to be able to understand how momentous was the effect of Luther's doctrine of justification and his preaching concerning works.

We know on the one hand from many examples with what zest the newly-won promoters of Lutheranism—for the most part former ministers of the Church who had discarded their calling—concentrated their attacks on the practice of good works, and, on the other, how the better-disposed followers of the new doctrine admitted the danger to works accruing from Luther's views and even their actually evil consequences.

The declamation of the preachers against works was partly intended to silence their own scruples. At any rate it was the

speediest method of obtaining a numerous following. The preachers were obliged to deal in some way with the objection constituted by the existence of far greater religious zeal in the olden Church than amongst the new believers ; they solved it by denouncing zeal for " outward works." They were also frequently obliged to extenuate their own laxity of morals, and this they did in the most convenient fashion by branding moral strictness as pharisaical holiness-by-works.

Thus it came about that some, even of the more cautious and moderate Lutherans, for instance Urban Rhegius, complained that the preachers were confining themselves to the denunciation of works and to proclaiming the power of faith alone, as though the great gift of the new religious system merely spelt release from everything displeasing to the flesh ; there they came very near justifying the constant assertion to this effect of the defenders of Catholicism, indeed the Catholics' most effective weapon.

Rhegius, who died in 1541, as General Superintendent of Lüneburg, summed up his experiences of the effect on the people of Luther's doctrine of Evangelical freedom, in the sermons he delivered at Hall in the Tyrol : " The rude, carnal people here think that the Law has been abolished and that we are released from it, so that we can do as we please ; hence, quite shamelessly and to the disgrace of the Evangel, they say : To steal and to commit adultery is no longer sinful, for the Law is no more of any account. Alas, what crass blindness has fallen upon this people, that they think the Son of God came into the world and suffered so much on account of sin in order that we might lead a shameful, dissolute and bestial life."[1]

A man of no great firmness of character, he had previously been episcopal vicar at Constance, and could speak from experience of the condition of things amongst the preachers of both Southern and Northern Germany.

He accused them of being responsible for the disastrous consequences, but forgot to seek the real cause in the doctrine itself. According to him not only did no two preachers agree in their preaching, so that the people complained they did not know which religion to follow, but too many were in the habit of speaking, " as though it were possible without doing penance and without any contrition or sorrow for sin to believe Christ's Gospel and rest secure in the proffered forgiveness."[2] They gave vent to utterances such as these : " Our works are no good and stink in God's nostrils. He does not want them. They only make hypocrites. Faith alone does all. If only you believe, you will become pious and be saved."[3]

[1] Urban Rhegius, " Eine Summe christl. Lehre," Augsburg, 1527, fol. 5. Döllinger, " Ref.," 2, p. 58.

[2] " U. Rhegii Deutsche Bücher und Schriften," 2, Nürnberg, 1562, p. 234. Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 59.

[3] U. Rhegius, " Wie man fürsichtiglich reden soll," ed. A. Uckeley, Leipzig, 1908, according to the 1536 German edition (" Quellenschriften zur Gesch. des Protest." 6), in Uckeley's summary, p. 7.

In 1535 he had recourse to the pen in order to impress on the preachers "How to speak with caution," as the title of his work runs. In this tract, published in German and Latin, he attempts to show from a number of instances "how the preachers run off the track on one side or the other," and how many of them "merely destroy and fail to build."[1] Anxious to drive home Luther's doctrine of good works, in the chapter devoted to this subject,[2] he mentions six different ways in which good works were profitable, which the preachers were not to forget. In all six, however, the real advantage and necessity of good works is not established on its true foundation. The curious tract was an imitation and enlargement of a work published in 1529 under the title: "Anweisung wie und was wir Ernst von Gots Gnaden Hertzog zu Braunswick und Leuneburg unseres Fürstenthumbs Pfarhern und Predigern zu predigen befohlen."[3] The secular rulers were often obliged, as in this instance, to intervene in order to safeguard the new faith from preachers who were either thoughtless, or too logical, or in some cases half crazy.

The complaints current among Luther's friends about the bad effects of the doctrine of justification were even heard long after the tumults of the earliest religious struggles were over.

For this reason we are not justified in making out the decline which followed in the train of the new system of faith to have been merely an episode in the history of civilisation and simply the inevitable after-effect of the great upheaval in the intellectual world. It has been argued that far-reaching and disturbing changes in public life are usually accompanied by an increase of immorality among the masses, and also that the disorders dating from Catholic times bore fruit only when brought in contact with the new religion. Unfortunately in the present case we have to do with conditions which, as later witnesses show, persisted even when tranquillity had once more been restored and when the fruits of the new ideas should already have ripened. "What is here disclosed," justly remarks Döllinger, "was the result of a system already firmly established, no mere after-effect of former conditions, but a true home produce continuing to flourish even when the thousand ties which had once linked human life and consciousness with the olden Church had long been torn and rent asunder, and when the memory of the doctrines, imagery, practices and institutions of that Church had either been completely forgotten by the people; or were known to them only through controversial references made in the pulpits and in the manuals of religious instruction."[4]

Andreas Hyperius, Professor at the University of Marburg and the best theological authority in Hesse († 1564), in view of the low religious and moral standards of the Protestants which he had had occasion to notice during his many journeys, declared

[1] Uckeley, *ibid.* [2] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 9, reprinted by Uckeley.
[4] "Die Reformation," 2, p. vii. f.

that it was necessary, particularly in the pulpit, to be more reticent on the article of Justification by faith alone. Not indeed that he was unwilling to have this preached, yet he did not consider it advisable to continue to "declaim to the masses with such violence on faith alone," as had hitherto been done. The state of the Church most urgently required that the people, who already troubled themselves little enough about doing good, should be spurred on to good works and, as far as possible, brought back to a faith productive of fruit.[1] Elsewhere he describes with indignation the generally prevailing indifference towards the poor; this annoyed him all the more, as he was well aware of the loving care displayed towards them by both clergy and laity in the past.[2]

In a document dealing with Luther's (or rather Flacius's) doctrine of man's passivity in the work of conversion, the theologians of Leipzig and Wittenberg, in 1570, attributed to it the prevailing corruption. "The masses," they said, "have been led into a wild, dissolute and godless life. . . . There is hardly a spot to be found in the whole world where greater modesty, honesty and virtue are not to be met with than amongst those who listen daily to God's Word."[3]

Thirty years later Polycarp Leyser, the Wittenberg Professor and Superintendent, who stood for the strictest form of Lutheranism, declared: "The moral corruption to-day is so great everywhere that not only pious souls but even nature herself gives vent to uneasy groans"; as the cause of it all he mentions the delusion under which many members of the new Church laboured, viz. of fancying themselves excellent Christians so long as they boasted loudly of faith and repeated Scripture passages concerning the unspeakable mercy of God Who received sinners into His favour without any co-operation on their part, even though meanwhile they led the most shameful life.[4]

"All these people have ever the faith in their mouths," wrote Wolfgang Franz, the Wittenberg professor of theology, in an admonition to the Lutheran preachers (1610); "they are ever prating of faith and of nothing but faith, and yet no one can adequately describe how brimful they are of vice and sin." For this the preachers were chiefly to blame, because they dinned Justification by faith alone into the people's ears without further explaining it; hence many of their hearers, who did not even know the Our Father, could discourse on faith more learnedly than St. Paul; they fancied that if only they protested now and then during their lifetime that they believed in Jesus Christ, their

[1] "Hyperii Varia opuscula theol.," tom. 2, Basil., 1580, p. 734. Döllinger, *ibid.*, 2, p. 216.

[2] *Ibid.*, tom. 1, Basil., 1570, p. 871; cp. p. 881. Döllinger, *ibid.*, 2, p. 215.

[3] "Wahrhaftiger Bericht," etc. (referring to the Altenburg Colloquy), 1507, Fol. D 2, Döllinger, "Reformation," 2, p. 261 f.

[4] "Fortgesetzte Sammlung von alten und neuen theol. Sachen," 1750, p. 676 ff. Döllinger, 2, p. 565.

salvation was assured; they thought that if a murderer who died after committing his crime had only time to confess Jesus with his lips he would at once soar up to heaven.[1]

Johannes Rivius, Rector of Freiberg, and a personal friend of Luther's, declared the very year after Luther's death that his experience had shown him that the Lutheran peasants knew neither what they should believe nor how they ought to live, and troubled themselves little about it; the people might well be taken for Epicureans were they not perpetually boasting of their faith in Christ. He bewailed his times, distinguished as they were beyond all past ages by their immorality; corruption of morals had indeed grown so bad that ungodliness and Epicureanism had quite ousted Christianity.[2]—Not long after, in another writing, he continued his description of the moral decay, and again and again points to the cause, viz. the false ideas of faith, law and works. "By far the greater number of people to-day take not the slightest pains to restrain the lusts of the flesh; . . . they indulge in every kind of impiety, while at the same time boasting of faith and bragging of the Gospel. . . . When the people hear nowadays that there is no other satisfaction for sin than the death of the Redeemer, they fancy they can sin with impunity and give themselves up to luxury. . . . How many are there who practise real penance though making so brave a show of faith? . . . They say: 'Even should you be stained with every vice, only believe and you will be saved; you need not be scared by the Law, for Christ has fulfilled it and done enough for men!' Such words [which Luther himself had used] give great scandal to pious souls, lead men astray into a godless life and are the cause of their continuing to live hardened in vice and shame and without a thought of amendment; thus such views only serve to encourage the ungodly in vice and deprive them of every incentive to amend their lives."[3]

If the leaders of the innovations could speak in such a way then yet stronger charges against the doctrine of Justification and its effects may be expected from Luther's opponents.

Johann Haner of Nuremberg, who there, in 1534, turned his back on the new faith, wrote a small book on the interpretation of Scripture which is accounted among the best and calmest of the period. The Preface shows that it was the sight of the immoral outcome of Luther's views on faith and grace which led him to revert to Catholicism. Without mentioning Luther's name he tells us that in his book he is going "to withstand all false, fleshly confidence," "all freedom of the spirit which leads to destruction"; the object of his attack is that faith which is "a mere presumptuous laying claim to grace, and that Evangel

[1] "Wolfg. Franzii Disputationes in August. Confess. Artic. posterior.," Disput. 10, "De bonis operibus"; in Pfeiffer, "Consilia theol.," p. 943 *seq.* Döllinger, 2, p. 570.

[2] Ioh. Rivius, "De stultitia mortalium," p. 32. Döllinger, 2, p. 600.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 50 *seq.*, and "Opp.," 1614, pp. 275, 305, 370, 672. Döllinger, 2, p. 601 ff.

which opens the door to licence of every kind," while "telling us to trust solely in an alien righteousness, viz. the righteousness of Christ"; "these anti-Evangelicals, as they ought to be called, by their roguery and their carnal mind had turned topsy-turvy the teaching which led to true piety."[1]

To Wicel the convert Haner wrote a letter which was one of the causes of his expulsion from Nuremberg by the preachers and the magistrates. Here he said: "By the worthless dogma of Justification by faith alone, which is their alpha and omega, they have not merely loosed all the bonds of discipline in the Church, but also abolished all penance towards God and all unity and friendship among the brethren. Never since the earliest heresies in the Church has there been seen so poisonous and noxious a dogma, the effect of which has been none other than to make the word of the Cross foolishness to us, and to cause both charity towards the brethren and the spirit of repentance towards God to wax cold."[2]

From Protestant Nuremberg it also was that Willibald Pirkheimer the patrician, as early as 1528, after his own return to the Church, wrote to a friend at Vienna, the architect Tschertte, "I confess that in the beginning I was a good Lutheran, just like our departed Albert [Dürer]. For we hoped that the Roman knavery and the roguery of the monks and priests would be amended. But now we see that matters have become so much worse, that, in comparison with the Evangelical scoundrels, those other scamps are quite pious." The Evangelicals with their "shameful and criminal behaviour" wished nevertheless "not to be judged by their works," and pointed to their faith. But "when a man acts wickedly and criminally he shows thereby that he is no honest man, however much he may boast of his faith; for without works faith is dead, just as works are dead without faith. . . . The works show plainly that there is neither faith nor truth there, no fear of God, or love of our neighbour, but a discarding of all honesty and clean living, art and learning. . . . Almsgiving has ceased, for these knaves have so abused it that no one will give any longer."[3]

A few years before this, Othmar Luscinius, an Alsacian theologian, then one of the most weighty scholars of Germany, who, save for having taken a passing fancy for Luther, remained true to the Church, described the "rude Christians," "whom really we ought to pity, who of the articles necessary for Justification take those only that please them and are sweet, viz. faith and the Evangel, arguing: 'I have only to believe and I shall be saved'; as for the other, which is bitter and far from

[1] "Haneri Prophetia vetus ac nova," Lips., 1534, Præf., Fol. B, a. Döllinger, 1, p. 129 f.

[2] "Epistolæ duæ J. Haneri et G. Wicelii," 1534, Fol. A 2 b, 3 a. Döllinger, 1, p. 127 f.

[3] In C. G. Murr, "Journal zur Kunstgesch. und Literatur," Tl. 10, Nürnberg, 1781, p. 40 ff. Döllinger, 1, p. 169. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 40.

easy, viz. the putting to death of the old Adam, that they take good care to leave alone."[1]

The above is sufficient to show that there was a consensus of opinion in tracing back the moral decadence to the Lutheran doctrine of works. As against this there is a certain strangeness in the explanation variously given by Protestants of this real retrogression: The complaints of Luther and his preachers, so they aver, only prove that they were dissatisfied, as it was their right and duty to be, with what had been achieved in the moral order.—At any rate, the distressing results of the doctrine of faith alone proved strikingly how ineffectual had been all Luther's exhortations to good works.

Luther's Utterances in Favour of Good Works.

Many and earnest are Luther's exhortations to prove our faith by works of love towards God and our neighbour; to sinners he frequently speaks of the path of penance which they must tread; conversion he wishes to be accomplished with lively faith and the state of grace preserved by practical piety. It was assuredly not the lack of such counsels which occasioned the decline described above; this was rather due to the system itself, combined with the evil effects of the general overthrow of the old ecclesiastical law and practice which safeguarded morals, and with the contempt aroused for the sacraments, for public worship and the spiritual authorities. History must, however, allow Luther's exhortations on behalf of good works and the keeping of the commandments to speak for themselves.

We may begin with his thesis: "We are bound to bring our will into entire conformity with the Divine Will."[2] In accordance with this, in his "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen," he does not fail to speak agreeably with the teaching of the olden Church of the assistance God gives for the zealous keeping of the commandments. "If you desire to keep all the commandments, to be rid of your evil lusts and of sin as the commandments enjoin and demand, then believe in Christ, for in Him I make bold to promise you all grace and righteousness, peace and freedom. If you believe, then you have it; if you do

[1] Luscinius (Nachtigall), "Evangel. Historie," 1525, pp. 445, 449. Döllinger, 1, p. 550.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 228; "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 321, n. 97.

not believe, you have it not. For what is impossible to you with all the works of the Law, of which there must be many though all to no profit, will be short and easy to you by faith. . . . The promises of God give both the command and the fulfilment."[1] What he means to say is, that, by faith, we receive grace in order to wage a successful "conflict with sin." Grace is, however, equivalent to faith. "Without grace," he had already taught before, "man cannot keep God's commandments." "The old man . . . is led by concupiscence." "But to faith all things are possible through Christ."[2]

Elsewhere he clearly teaches that faith alone is not nearly enough; to rely exclusively on this must indeed be termed "folly"; with the assistance of grace man must also keep the Law.[3]

In spite of all he has to say against Moses and his harsh and terrifying "Law"—the Ten Commandments inclusive—when he is busy exalting the Evangel, he nevertheless has occasionally high praise for the Decalogue on account of its agreement with the law of nature. His exposition of it contains much that is worth taking to heart.[4] Faith, he points out, shows us whence the strength for keeping the Ten Commandments is to be drawn.[5]

The Christian, according to a lengthy and beautiful passage in the Church Postils (in a sermon for the Feast of the Conception), must "struggle and fight" against his lusts and must seek to resist the darts of the wicked one.[6] "If we have been baptised and believe, we have received grace, and this contends with the evil inclinations within us and expels and destroys original sin; then good and honest desires for humility, chastity, longanimity and all the virtues awaken in us, and at once good works begin to be performed with a cheerful heart. All this is done by the grace which we receive in baptism by faith in Christ; it is impossible for such grace to remain idle, but it must needs bring forth good works."

Emphatic admonitions to preserve chastity and a reminder of the religious means to be employed are also frequent with him, for instance, in his "Von guten Wercken," written in 1520 at Spalatin's instigation, to repel the charge that his teaching was antagonistic to any striving after virtue, to morality or Christian works. He dedicated the writing to Duke Johann, the brother of the Saxon Elector. Chastity, he there says, is indeed a hard matter, but it must be acquired. "Even were no other work commanded besides chastity we should all of us have enough to do, so dangerous and furious is the [contrary] vice. . . . To get the better of all this requires labour and trouble, and in fact all the commandments of God teach us how important is the rightful performance of good works, nay that it is impossible of our own strength even to plan a good work, let alone commence and

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 24; Erl. ed., 27, p. 180.
[2] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 1 p. 145 f.; "Opp, lat. var.," 1, p. 235 *seq.*
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 14^2, pp. 179 f., 182.
[4] *Ibid.*, 21, p. 34 ff. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 94. [6] *Ibid.*, 15^2, p. 54.

accomplish it. . . . This work of chastity, if it is to be preserved, impels us to many other good works, to fasting and temperance, in order to resist gluttony and drunkenness, to watching and early rising, in spite of our laziness and love for slumber, to strive and to labour in overcoming idleness. For gluttony and drinking, too much sleep, idleness and loitering are the weapons of unchastity. . . . These exercises, however, must not be carried further than is necessary to subdue unchastity, not to the extent of damaging our frame. The strongest weapons of all are prayer and the Word of God. . . . Thus you see that each one finds enough to do in himself and good works in plenty to perform. Yet now no one makes use of prayer, fasting, watching and labour for this purpose, but looks upon these works as an end in themselves, though the performance of these works of the Law ought to be regulated daily so as to be ever more and more purified [the sentence contains Luther's usual perversion of Catholic doctrine and practice]. Other things also have been mentioned as to be avoided, such as soft beds and clothing, unnecessary adornments, the society, sight and conversation of men or women, and much else conducive to chastity. In all this no one can lay down a fixed rule and measure. Each one must decide for himself what things and how many are helpful to chastity, and for how long." Here he even pays a tribute to the monasteries founded in bygone ages to teach the "young people discipline and cleanliness." Finally he insists that "a good, strong faith" "helps greatly in this work," since "faith ever liveth and doth all our works."[1]

The ravings of the fanatics repeatedly furnished him with an occasion to emphasise good works more strongly and even to speak of a faith working by love.

His dislike for their lawless behaviour and their praise of the Spirit, to some extent directed against ordinary works, called him into the arena. To call back the disturbers to a more moral life and to the considerations of charity, he appealed to them to "exercise themselves in the faith that worketh by charity" (Gal. v. 6). Even the Epistle of James now appeared to him good enough to quote, particularly the verse (i. 22): "Be ye doers of the the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves"; from this Epistle he also borrows the comparison of a dead faith, viz. of a faith not made living through charity, with the face as seen in a glass, which is merely the semblance of a countenance and not the reality.[2]

It was the fanatics again who in 1530 drew from him some eloquent statements in favour of good works, because, so he said, they had misrepresented his doctrine that "Good works neither make a man pious nor blot out sin." They said "they would give their good works for a groat," and that all good works were not worth a peppercorn. Here he professes to see great danger in contempt for good works and the perversion of his teaching by

[1] *Ibid.*, 16^2, p. 210 f.; cp. Weim. ed., 6, p. 268 f.; 9, p. 293 f.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 3 f.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 208.

the "devil's lying tongue." Good works, according to him, are rather to be esteemed very highly because they are God's own. "If it is a good work, then God has wrought it in and by me"; "it was done for the honour and glory of God and for the profit and salvation of my neighbour." He himself had been far from questioning this and had merely taught that works did not conduce to piety, i.e. "to justify the soul and to placate God"; this, on the contrary, was "entirely the work of the One true God and of His grace."[1]

Just as during his public career Luther looked upon such statements as all the more useful seeing they blunted the edge of the awkward inferences drawn from the new Evangel, and served to vindicate his action from the charge of loosening the bonds of morality, so, at the close of his days, he was obliged in a similar way to hark back to the defence of good works against Antinomianism, of which the principal spokesman was Johann Agricola. It is true that the Antinomians based their contempt for the Law, which they said was harmful, and for the excessive respect for commandments and good works which, according to them, still prevailed, on nothing less than Luther's own teaching. In reality it was to his advantage that their exaggerations forced him to explain away much that he had said, or at least to exercise greater caution. The encounter with Agricola the Antinomian will be described later (vol. v., xxix., 3). In spite of his being thus compelled to take the Law and good works under his wing in this controversy, Luther never, then or later, put forward the true relation of the Law to the Gospel nor the real foundation of good works.[2] He became involved in contradictions, and to the end of his days it became more and more apparent how forced had been the introduction into his theology of good works and the keeping of the Law.

Nicholas Amsdorf, Luther's intimate friend and most docile pupil, published in 1559 a tract entitled "That the proposition 'Good works are harmful to salvation' is a good and Christian one preached both by St. Paul and by Luther." Their "harmfulness" resided in their being regarded as meritorious for salvation. We may wonder what Luther would have thought of this writing had he been alive? In any case the Lutheran Formula of Concord of 1577 contains a mild protest against it: "The assertion that good works are necessary is not to be reprehended, seeing that it may be understood in a favourable sense";[3] it also appeals to what had been laid down in the Augsburg

[1] *Ibid.*, 30, 3, p. 214=63, p. 295, Preface to "Der Wiedertauffer Lere" of Justus Menius.

[2] "Opp. lat. var.," 4, pp. 419 *seq.*, 434.

[3] "Solida declaratio," 4, n. 15. "Symbolische Bücher[10]," p. 627.

Confession; it could "not be gainsaid that, in both the Confession and the '*Apologia*,' the words: 'Good works are necessary,' are frequently used."[1]

As for the attitude of the Augsburg Confession, it declares concerning works—a declaration for which Melanchthon's cautious pen was solely responsible—"We also teach that such faith [in Christ, whereby man is justified] must produce good fruit and good works, and that we must perform all manner of good works which God has commanded, for God's sake."[2]

No one was so much concerned as Melanchthon in insisting that the performance of good works should be represented as indispensable to the people, particularly from the pulpit. It vexed him, the more prudent of the two, to hear Luther again and again, and that often in hyperbolical and paradoxical form, laying such stress on faith alone. How far Melanchthon's name may justifiably be quoted against what was undesirable in the olden Protestant teaching on works, should be clear from what has already been said concerning this theological henchman of Luther's (cp. vol. iii., p. 347 ff.).

Luther's admirers are wont to quote the following utterance of his when praising his attitude towards works: "Good, pious works never made a good, pious man, but a good, pious man performs good, pious works. Wicked works never made a wicked man, but wicked men perform wicked works."[3] That "wicked deeds never made a wicked man" he probably found some difficulty in really convincing many. If Luther meant that an unjust man or sinner, who is not cleansed by faith in Christ, can never act but wickedly, then it is the same error as we find in other passages and which is repeated in connection with the words just quoted: "Unless a man believes beforehand and is a Christian ['consecrated by faith'] all his works are of no account, but are vain, foolish, criminal and damnably sinful." This is surely as much beside the mark as the above statement of Luther's concerning the relation between a "pious man" and "pious works." Of supernatural works that are meritorious for heaven what Luther adds is indeed correct:

[1] *Ibid.*, n. 14.

[2] Art. 6. Cp. Art. 20. "Symbolische Bücher,"[10] pp. 40, 44.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 32; Erl. ed., 27, p. 191, "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen."

"Hence, in every instance the person must first be good and pious previous to all works, and the good works follow and proceed from a good and pious person." We must, however, decline to accept Luther's other inferences, viz. that the sinner is not in a position to perform natural good works of his own, and that the just man does not become more righteous through good works.

Hence Luther's statement, however apparently ingenious, cannot remove the unfavourable impression produced by his doctrine of works. That it was highly valued by its author is plain from the number of times he repeats it under different forms. "Works do not make a Christian, but a Christian performs works," so he exclaimed in a sermon in 1523, summing up in these specious words the instruction he had just given, viz. that the faithful must struggle to remove whatever of evil there is in them, and that they must "work good to their neighbour," but not on any account try "to blot out sin by works, for this would be to shame and blaspheme God and Christ and to disgrace their own heritage," viz. Justification by faith alone.[1]

Works of Charity. Luther and the Ages of the Past.

For the purpose of recommending the Lutheran doctrine of works it is sometimes urged that Luther, while slighting other works of less account, assigned a place of honour to active works of charity, done for the sake of our neighbour, that he placed them on a firmer moral basis than they had hitherto occupied and promoted them so far as the unfavourable circumstances of his age allowed. A few words on the conception and particularly on the practice of charity as advocated by him may serve as a fit conclusion to the present section.

First, we may mention that Luther is disposed to exaggerate the importance of works of charity done to our neighbour.

It was an unjustifiable and paralysing restriction on the pious impulse towards works pleasing to God that Luther embodied in the rule he repeatedly lays down regarding works, viz. that they must be directed exclusively towards the benefit of others. "On this earth," so he teaches in his Church postils, "man does not live for the sake of works,

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 17^2, p. 11. Cp. above, p. 438, n. 7.

nor that they may profit him, for he has no need of them, but all works must be done for the sake of our neighbour." "Thus must all works be done, that we see to it that they tend to the service of other people, impart to them the right faith and bring them to Christ's Kingdom." They bring them the "right faith" when they serve to "quiet their conscience." Thus even here the Kingdom of God, which consists in the forgiveness of sins, must also play its part.

Catholic doctrine recognises a wider field for good works. It regards as such even the works which the faithful perform directly for their own soul without any reference to their neighbour, such as self-conquest in contending against one's own passions, or those works which are concerned primarily with honouring God whether in public worship or in the private life of the Christian. Luther himself, at least incidentally, also knows how to speak of the value of such works, though thereby he contradicts his other statements like the above.

If, however, we neglect the principle, we have to admit, that Luther's frequent exhortations to neighbourly charity and kindness contain some fine and truly Evangelical thoughts. With deep feeling he expresses his sorrow that his admonitions are not heeded to the extent he would have wished.

In his statements already quoted concerning the corruption of morals consequent on the change of religion, we have heard him several times lamenting the notorious falling off in private benevolence and the quite remarkable decrease of public works of Christian charity. Everywhere avarice reigns supreme, so we have heard Luther repeatedly exclaim, and a reprehensible indolence in the doing of what is good has spread far and wide; everything is now different from what it had been "in the time of the monks and parsons," when people "founded and built" right and left, and when even the poorest was anxious to contribute.[1]

His defenders now declare, that he "unlocked the true

[1] Cp. above 472 f., 210, 194 f., and *passim*. To supplement what he there says on the scarcity and smallness of contributions towards Divine worship and preaching we may add two other utterances of Luther's given by Möhler ("KG.," 3. pp. 149 and 160): Nobles, burghers and peasants were all intent on letting the clergy starve that the Evangel might cease to be proclaimed.—"Unless something is done soon, there will be an end in this land to Evangel, pastors and schools; they will have to run away, for they have nothing, and go about looking like haggard ghosts."

source of charity" by denying any meritorious character to works, thus sending to limbo the imperfect, mediæval motive of charity and substituting a better one in its place, viz. a "grateful love springing from faith." Luther's own words have been used to decry earlier ages, as though charity then had "merely had itself in view," people in those days having been intent solely on laying up merit "for them and theirs."

It is perfectly true that the Catholic Church gladly emphasises the reward charity brings to the giver.

If in the times previous to Luther's day, both in the Middle Ages and before, the Church frequently extolled the temporal and everlasting reward of charity, and if this proved to the faithful an incentive, she could at least in so doing appeal to those passages in the Gospel itself which promise to the charitable a heavenly recompense. Yet the thought of this reward did not exclude other high and worthy motives. So little were such motives slighted in the mediæval practice of charity, that, side by side with the heavenly reward, the original deeds of foundations, gifts and pious legacies still extant allege all kinds of other reasons, for instance, compassion for the helpless and concern for their bodily and spiritual welfare, or the furtherance of the common good by the establishment of institutions of public utility. One formula frequently used, which, taken literally, seems actually to ignore all merit and reward, runs variously: "For God's sake only"; "for God"; or, "in order to please Him with temporal goods." Thus the author of the "Wyhegertlin für alle frummen Christenmenschen,"[1] a German work of edification, wrote in 1509: "Thanks to God's grace there are still in our towns many hundreds of brothers and sisters who have united themselves out of Christian charity and compassion for the purpose of serving the poor sick people, the infirm, plague-stricken and lepers, purely for God's sake."

Duke George of Saxony, in his reply to Luther's "Widder den Meuchler zu Dresen," really expresses the motive for the active Catholic charity formerly so lavishly displayed, when he speaks of the great possessions given by past ages of which the religious revolt had robbed the Church; of the "gifts freely given by nobles, burghers and peasants out of ardent Christian love and gratitude for His sacred bitter Passion, bright blood and guiltless death, to cloisters, parish churches, altars, chapels, cells, hospitals, religious houses, crafts," etc.[2]

Neither did such motives or the motive of reward curtail the spirit of charity towards the close of the Middle Ages, as some Protestants have chosen to assert. On the contrary they served to animate it.

[1] Mayence, 1509, Bl. 7.

[2] "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 25^2 (where the whole of the Duke's reply is printed), p. 144.

On the basis of the data furnished by German archives a modern historian remarks of those times : " The spirit of Christian charity showed itself most active in the foundation of benevolent institutions, in which respect hardly any age can compare with the 15th century."[1] " Towards the close of the Middle Ages the gifts to hospitals, pest-houses and hostels were simply innumerable " ; such is the opinion of another researcher.[2] Even G. Uhlhorn, in his " Geschichte der christlichen Liebestätigkeit," had to admit : " No period did so much for the poor as the Middle Ages," though, agreeably to the standard of his peculiar Lutheranism, this author would fain make out that good works then were done out of mere egotism.

Other Protestant authorities allow, that, even according to Luther's own admission, the Catholic charity far exceeded that displayed by the new faith. " Here " (among the Catholics), says one historian, " Confraternities for the care of the poor and sick arose in the 16th and 17th centuries which far surpassed anything hitherto known in the purity of their aims and their extraordinary achievements. . . . Among the Catholics the reform in the nursing of the sick proceeded from Spain, which also produced the men who loomed largest in the Catholic Counter-Reformation, viz. the Jesuits and the Dominicans. From Spain came the model of the modern hospital with the nursing staff as we now know it." " The Protestant communities during the two centuries which followed the Reformation showed a great lack of fruitfulness as regards works of charity." " The hospitals in the Protestant districts, with few exceptions, were and remained bad, nor was anything done to improve them."[3]

Although Luther's praiseworthy efforts to awaken charity were not altogether wasted, yet neither his success in some localities nor the supposed purer and higher spirit he introduced into deeds of love were so apparent as to bear comparison with the charity so sedulously cultivated on the Catholic side. On the contrary, his complaints confirm the suspicion that in Lutheran circles works of charity were as a rule lamed by the lack of that very spirit of piety which should have been so manifest. (More in vol. vi., xxxv., 4.)

In 1528 he told the inhabitants of Wittenberg : " This week your offerings will be solicited. I hear that people say they will give nothing to the collectors, but will turn them away. Well, thank God ! You most ungrateful creatures, who are so grudging with your money, refuse to give anything, and, not satisfied with this, heap abuse on the ministers of the Church ! I wish you a happy year. I am so horrified, that I do not know whether to continue preaching any longer to you, you rude brutes who cannot give even four half-pence ungrudgingly." It was a

[1] S. Riezler, " Gesch. Bayerns," 3, 1889, p. 809.

[2] R. Wackernagel (" Basler Zeitschr. f. Gesch.," 2, 1903, p. 181).

[3] Dietrich, " Über Gesch. der Krankenpflege " in Liebe-Jacobsohn-Meyer, " Hdb. der Krankenversorgung und Krankenpflege," 1, Berlin, 1899, p. 47 ff.

disgrace, he says, that so far the fiscal authorities had been obliged to provide for the churches, the schools and the poor in the hospitals, whom it was the people's duty as Christians to support. "Now that you are called upon to give four beggarly half-pence, you feel it a burden." "Deceivers will come who will wax fat at your expense as happened formerly [in Catholic times]. I am sorry that you have arrived at such a glorious state of freedom, free from all tyrants and Papists, for, thankless brutes that you are, you don't deserve this Evangelical treasure. Unless you mend your ways and act differently I shall cease to preach to you in order not to cast pearls before swine and to give what is holy to the dogs, and shall proclaim the Gospel to my real students who are the poor beggar-men. Formerly you gave so much to the wicked seducers [the Catholic clergy] and now . . . !"[1] Already, the year before, he had vigorously complained from the pulpit, though, as it would appear, all to no purpose: "Amongst those who hear the Word, faith is dull and charity has grown cold and hope is at an end, etc. There is no one who pities his brother's distress. Once upon a time we gave a hundred, two hundred, five hundred, or even a thousand pieces of gold to the monks, canons or priests for the building of monasteries and churches. To-day no one can be found who will give a coin, let alone a piece of gold, for the poor. For this reason God sends His judgments on the world and curses the earth on account of the contempt for His Word and His Evangel; but we may look for yet worse things in the future."[2]

Amongst the reminiscences of his journey to Italy, Luther retained a kindly memory of the charity as practised by the Catholics, particularly at Florence. We read in Lauterbach's Diary on Aug. 1, 1538: "Then Luther spoke of charity in Italy and how the hospitals there were cared for. They are located in princely buildings, are amply supplied with food and drink, the servants are most diligent and attentive, the physicians very skilled, the bedding and clothing are perfectly clean and the beds are even painted. When a patient is brought in, he has at once to strip, an inventory of his clothes is made in the presence of a notary and they are then kept carefully for him. Then he is dressed in a white shirt and put in a nice painted bed with clean sheets, and after a little while two physicians are at his bedside; servants come and bring him food and drink in perfectly clean glass goblets, which they do not touch even with a finger, carrying everything on a tray. Even the greatest ladies come there, muffled up completely so as to be unrecognisable, in order to serve the poor for some days, after which they return to their homes. At Florence I have seen what great care is bestowed on the hospitals. Also on the foundling homes where the children are admirably installed, fed and taught, are all dressed alike and in the same colour and treated in a right fatherly way."[3]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 409 ff. (from notes).

[2] *Ibid.* 24, p. 454 (from notes).

[3] Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 283; "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 425 f., Table-Talk.

5. Other Innovations in Religious Doctrine

The absence of any logical system in Luther's theological and moral views is so far from being denied by Protestants who know his theology that they even reproach Luther's opponents for expecting to find logic in him. No system, but merely "the thought-world of a great religious man" is, so they say, all that we may look for in his works; it is true that he had a "general religious theory," but it was "faulty, in its details not seldom contradictory, and devised for a practical and polemical object." "Luther was no dogmatic theologian or man of system," hence his individual sayings must not always be treated as though they were parts of a system.

There can be no doubt that this is a defect in a teacher who comes forward as the founder of a denomination and as the restorer of Christian doctrine, and who, in his quality of "Prophet of the Germans," declares: "Before me people knew nothing." After all, precision and coherence of doctrines form a test of their truth.

In reality the facts of the case are only indicated in a veiled way in the Protestant admissions just recorded. The truth is, as the reader has already had many an occasion to see, that, with Luther, one assertion frequently invalidates the other. Even in the field of moral teaching we find him at utter variance with himself, and his contradictions become particularly glaring as soon as he passes from theory to practice. Here it is easy to seize the "consummate contradictions of his theology," of which a present-day Protestant theologian ventures boldly to speak; we may also subscribe to what this same writer says, viz. that Luther hardened his heart against certain consequences of his own religious principles.[1] (Cp. p. 415, 447; vol. ii., p. 312, etc.)

The Regula Fidei.

Such a denial of the consequences of the principles of his doctrine lies first and foremost in the fact that Luther summed up in a Rule of Faith the various dogmas to which it was his intention to remain true. The "*regula fidei*," such as he wished to bequeath to posterity, he saw expressed

[1] A. Harnack, "Dogmengesch.," 3^3, p. 733 ff.; 3^4, p. 819 ff.

in the Confession of Augsburg, and in the oldest Œcumenical Creeds of the Church.

It has already been seen that the radicalism involved in his religious attitude should by rights have issued in a freedom, nay, licence, which would have rendered impossible any binding formularies of faith.

It is also the opinion of most modern Protestant theologians that the definition of doctrine which began with the Confession of Augsburg, or in fact with the Articles of Marburg, really constituted an unjustifiable encroachment on the freedom of religious thought inaugurated by Luther. Luther indeed invested these doctrinal formularies with all the weight of his authority, yet, according to these theologians, they represented a " narrowing " of the Evangelical ideas advocated by him ; nor can it be gainsaid that the revolutionary ideas for which Luther stood from about 1520 to 1523 justify such strictures.[1]

" This promising spring," writes Adolf Harnack, a representative of theological freedom, " was followed by no real summer. In those years Luther was lifted above himself and seemed to have overcome the limitations of his peculiar temperament." . . . But Luther unfortunately reverted to his limitations. Nor were they " merely a light vesture, or as some would fain have us believe, due simply to lack of comprehension on the part of Melanchthon and other henchmen, for Luther himself saw in them the very foundation of his strength and made the fullest use of them as such."[2]

In other words, his contradiction with his own original principles became to him, so to speak, a second nature. He was in deadly earnest with the dogmas which he retained, and which were comprised in the official Articles of faith. In so far, therefore, he may be said to have turned away from the consequences of his own action and to have striven to slam the door which he had opened to unbelief and private judgment.

Of the Confession of Augsburg, the most important of these declarations of faith, Harnack says : " That the Gospel of the Reformation found masterly expression in the ' *Augustana*,' that I cannot admit. The ' *Augustana* ' founded a teaching Church ; on it must be laid the blame for the narrowing of the movement of reform. Could such a thing have been written previous to 1526, or even previous to 1529 ? "

After admitting elsewhere the advantages of the Confession of Augsburg, Harnack proceeds : " It is possible by retracing our steps to arrive through it at the broader Evangelical ideas without which there would never have been a Reformation or an

[1] See above, vol. iii., p. 5 ff. [2] " DG.," 3^4, p. 811.

'*Augustana.*' With regard to their author, however, it is no use blinking the fact, that here Melanchthon undertook, or rather was forced to undertake, a task to which his gifts and his character were not equal."[1] "In the theology of Melanchthon the moralist, who stands at the side of Luther the Evangelist, we discern attempts to amend Luther's theology. . . . Melanchthon, however, felt himself cramped by having to act as the guardian of Lutheranism. We cannot take it ill if Lutherans prefer to err with Luther their hero, rather than submit to be put in Melanchthon's leading-strings."[2]

Harnack and those who think like him are even more antagonistic to the later creeds of Lutheranism than to the Confession composed by Melanchthon. "The 'symbolic age' when the 'Lutheran Church' gave 'definite expression' to her will is nothing more than a *fable convenue.* 'This Lutheran Church as an actual body,' says Carl Müller, 'never really existed and the spokesmen of the strictest Luther faction were just the worst enemies of such a union. . . . Thus to speak of creeds of the Lutheran Church involves an historic impossibility.'"[3] According to these theologians Protestantism must hark back to Luther's original principles of freedom. Moreover, argues Harnack, Protestantism has on the whole already reverted to this earlier standpoint. "We are not forsaking the clear testimony of history when we find in Luther's Christianity and in the first beginnings of the Reformation all that present-day Protestantism has developed, though amidst weakness and constraint; nor when we state that Luther's idea of faith is still to-day the moving spirit of Protestantism, however many or however few may have made it their own."[4] Luther's "most effective propositions," according to him, may well be allowed to stand as the "heirloom of the Evangelical Churches"; it is plain that they do not lead to a mere "dogmatic Christianity," but to true Christianity consisting in the "disposition which the Father of Jesus Christ awakens in the heart through the Gospel." Luther himself has only to be rightly appreciated and "allowed to remain Luther."[5]

Harnack repeatedly insists that Luther by setting aside all authority on dogma, whether of the Church, the hierarchy or tradition, also destroyed the binding character of any "doctrine." By his attack on all authority he dealt a mortal blow at the vital principle of the ancient Church, traceable back to the second century. According to him "every doctrinal formulary of the past required objective proof"; this objective proof was to him the sole authority. "How then could there be authority when the objective proof failed or seemed to demonstrate the contrary?" To judge of the proof is within the province of each individual, and, according as he is constituted, the result will be

[1] P. 684, n. 1. [2] P. 895.
[3] P. 811. Carl Müller, "Preuss. Jahrb.," 63, Hft. 2, p. 147.
[4] "DG.," 3^3, p. 616 (omitted in the 4th edition).
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 808, and 3^4, p. 896 f.

different. "Luther—even at the most critical moment, when he seemed to stand in the greatest need of the formal authority of the letter—did not allow himself to be overawed or his mouth to be closed even by the Apostles' Creed." He indeed "involved himself later in limitations and restrictions," "but there can be no doubt . . . that by his previous historic behaviour towards them he had undermined all the formal authorities of Catholicism."[1]

On this fundamental question of the possibility of a "*regula fidei*" in Luther's case, we may listen to the opinion of another esteemed Protestant historian of late years.

Friedrich Paulsen, in his much-prized "Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts," writes: "The Word of God does not suffice as a '*regula fidei*,' but a personal authority is also needed to decide on questions of doctrine, this is what the Luther of 1535 says and thereby confutes the Luther of 1521, who refused to allow anyone on earth to point out to him the faith unless he himself could gather its truth from the Word of God. Had Luther abided by his rejection of all human authority he should have declared: On the interpretation of Scripture there is no final court of appeal, each one believes or errs at his own peril. . . . What Luther had relied on in 1521 against the Papists, viz. inability to refute him from Scripture, was used against him in his own struggle with the 'fanatics.' . . . For the confuting of heretics a rule of faith is needed, and what is more, a living one to decide in each case. The principle of 1521, to allow no authority on earth to prescribe the faith, is anarchical. On these lines there can be no 'Church' with an '*examen doctrinæ*' of its candidates and Visitations of the clergy. This the Reformers also saw and thus there was nothing left for them, if they were to retain a 'Church,' than to set up their own authority in the stead of the authority of Pope and Councils. On one vexatious point they were, however, at a loss: Against the later Luther it was always possible to appeal to the Luther of Worms. The starting-point and *raison d'être* of the whole Reformation was the repudiation on principle of all human authority in matters of faith; after this, to find Luther installed as Pope, was scarcely pleasing. If anyone stands in need of a Pope he would surely be better advised in sticking to the real one at Rome. . . . The hole in Luther's teaching still remains a hole in the principle of the Protestant Church to-day: There can be no earthly authority in matters of faith, and: Such an authority there must be, this is an antinomy which lies at its very root. Nor is the antinomy accidental, but lies in the very nature of the matter and is expressed as often as we speak of the 'Protestant Church.' If there is to be a Church . . . then the individual must submit himself and his 'faith' to the 'faith' of the community." Paulsen, who had spoken of "Luther as Pope," refers to Luther's own remark when taking his seat with Bugenhagen in the carriage in which he went to meet Vergerio the Papal Nuncio: "Here go the German Pope and Cardinal Pomeranus, God's chosen instruments"; Luther's remark was

[1] 3⁴, p. 857 f.

of course spoken in jest, but the jest "was only possible against a background of bitter earnest"; Luther frequently dallied with this idea; "for the position Luther occupied, ages even after his death, there really was no other comparison to be found. . . . With the above jest Luther reduced himself *ad absurdum.*"[1] —Such censures are in reality more in place than those eulogies of Luther's exclamation at Worms in 1521 on the freedom of Bible conviction, into which orthodox Protestant biographers of Luther sometimes lapse.

Some Peculiarities of the New Doctrine on the Sacraments, Particularly on Baptism.

The theological pillars of the edifice of public worship are the seven sacraments, the visible signs ordained by Christ by which grace is given to our souls. Held in honour even by the Nestorians and Monophysites as witnesses to ecclesiastical antiquity, they enfold and hallow all the chief events of human life. Luther debased the effect of the sacraments by making it something wholly subjective, produced by the recipients themselves in virtue of the faith infused into them by God, whereas the Church has ever recognised the sacraments as sublime and mysterious signs, which of themselves work in the receiver ("*ex opere operato*") according to the extent of his preparation, Christ having made the grace promised dependent on the outward signs instituted by Himself. Luther, on the other hand, by declaring the sacraments mere symbols whereby faith is strengthened, operative only by virtue of the recipient's faith in the pardon and forgiveness of his sins, reduced them to the status of empty pledges for soothing and consoling consciences. Only later did he again come nearer to the Catholic doctrine of the "*opus operatum.*" With his view, however, that the sole object of the sacraments is to increase the "*fides specialis,*" we arrive again at the point which for Luther is the sum total of religion, viz.: "mere forgiveness."

He was not at all conscious of the contradiction involved in his vigorous insistence on the absolute necessity of the sacraments for salvation. From his standpoint Carlstadt was far more logical when he said: "If Christ [alone] is peace and assurance [of salvation], then lifeless creatures [the sacramental, outward signs] can surely not satisfy or make secure."[2]

[1] Vol. 1², p. 213 ff.

[2] Cp. Möhler, "Symbolik," 30. Cp. above, vol. iii., p. 10 f.

Luther raised no objection to infant baptism. He also wished it, and baptism in general, to be given in the usual way in the name of the Trinity. But how did he try to solve the difficulty arising from his theory of the sacraments: If the sacrament only works in virtue of the faith of the receiver and the effect is merely an increase of faith, of what advantage can it be to the infant who is incapable of belief? He endeavoured to remedy the defect with the help of the faith of the congregation.

Meeting difficulties on this line he did not shrink from claiming a perpetually recurring miracle, and proposed to assume that, during the act of baptism, the new-born infant was momentarily endowed by God with the use of reason and filled with faith.

In his "*De captivitate babylonica*" he had already attempted to cut the Gordian knot presented by infant baptism by this assumption, which, however arbitrary, is quite intelligible from his psychological standpoint. Thanks to the believing prayer of the congregation who present the children for baptism, so he said, faith is infused into them and they thus become regenerate. In 1523 he states that children have a hidden faith. "From that time onwards the tendency of his teaching was to require faith from candidates for baptism. . . . Even after the Concord he continued to speak exactly as before."[1] The Bible teaches nothing about infant baptism. Yet Luther declares in 1545 in a set of theses: "It is false and outrageous to say that little children do not believe, or are unworthy," while at the head of the theses these words stand: "Everything that in the Church, which is God's people, is taught without the Word of God, is assuredly false and unchristian."[2]

It is of interest to follow up his arguments for the faith of infants. In 1522 already he had attempted in a letter to prove to Melanchthon the possibility of such unconscious faith. He referred him to the circumstance, which, however, is irrelevant, "that we retain the faith while asleep or otherwise engaged." Moreover, since to him who believes, everything is possible with God, so, too, to the congregation which prays for the children; the children are presented

[1] Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 2^2, p. 237 f.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 170, "Wider die xxxii. Artikel der Teologisten von Löven."

by the congregation to the Lord of all, and He, by His Omnipotence, kindles faith in them. In the same letter, aimed at the Anabaptists, who were then beginning to be heard of, we find an emphatic appeal to the authority and belief of the Church ("*totius orbis constans confessio*"), which, as a rule, Luther was so ruthless in opposing. "It would be quite impious to deny that infant baptism agrees with the belief of the Church; to do so would be tantamount to denying the Church"; it was a special miracle that infant baptism had never been attacked by heretics; there was therefore good reason to hope that Christ, now, would trample the new foemen "under our feet." Luther forgets that the ancient Church was not hampered by such a heel of Achilles as was his own teaching, viz. that the sacraments owed all their efficacy to faith. We can, however, quite understand his admission to Melanchthon: "I have always expected that Satan would lay violent hands on this weak spot, but he has chosen to stir up this pernicious quarrel, not through the Papists, but with the help of our own people."[1] The rise of the Anabaptist heresy was indeed merely a natural reaction against Luther's doctrine of baptism.

Seeing that the doctrine of baptism is of such importance to the Christian Church, we may be permitted to consider the inferences regarding the sacrament of baptism drawn in modern times from Luther's conception of it, and from his whole attitude towards faith and Christianity. A domestic dispute among the Protestants at Bremen in 1905 on the validity of baptism not administered according to the usages of the Church, led to a remarkable discussion among theologians of broader views, some of whom went so far as to argue in Luther's name and that of his Reformation, that baptism should be abolished.

Johannes Gottschick in "Die Lehre der Reformation von der Taufe" (1906) defended the opinion that, according to the real views of the Reformers, baptism was valid even when conferred without any mention of the Trinity.—O. Scheel, on his side,

[1] To Melanchthon from the Wartburg, Jan. 13, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 273 f. Because reason is "diametrically opposed to faith" and gleams only like "a smudge on a lantern" (p. 156), people, so he says, "would believe better were they a little less reasonable" (p. 162). But "even though it were true, which it is not," and even were we to allow that infants do not believe at all, are without reason and cannot grasp the Word of God, would their baptism therefore "be wrong"? Even then it would have its value.

pointed out in his book "Die dogmatische Behandlung der Tauflehre in der modernen positiven Theologie" (1906), that a contradiction with the principle of the Reformation was apparent even in Luther's own theology, inasmuch as, according to this principle, baptism should merely be the proclaiming of the Word of God; in the ceremony of baptism, according to the Reformation teaching, which should be taken seriously, "the Word is all"; baptism is the solemn declaration that the child has been received into the congregation and the bestowal on it of the promise of salvation, hence requires no repetition. "As to when the Word works faith [in them] we do not know, nor is it necessary that theology should know"; the power of God knows the day and the hour.[1]—The question: "Can baptism be regarded rightly as the exclusive act of reception into the Church?" was answered negatively by Rietschel in an article under that title in the "Deutsche Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht,"[2] in which he too appeals to Luther. At any rate Rietschel's conclusion is, that, since Luther makes the Christian state dependent on faith, the baptismal act as such cannot, according to him, be of any essential importance; he thinks it possible to complete Luther's doctrine on baptism in the light of that of Zwingli and Calvin, who were of opinion that the children of Christian parents, by their very birth were received into the Church.

Luther's attitude towards these questions was treated of more in detail by the editor of the Deutsch-Evangelische Blätter, Erich Haupt, Professor of theology at Halle.[3]

Haupt agrees with Gottschick as to the possibility of discarding the Trinitarian formula in baptism, in that, like Rietschel, all he considers necessary is the liturgical retention of some definite form of words. He also subscribes in principle to Rietschel's contention that it is possible to enter the Church without baptism. Going even further, however, he declares with regard to Luther, that it was not even necessary to borrow from Zwingli and Calvin as Rietschel had proposed. "I believe the admission that salvation may be secured even without baptism, is a necessary corollary of Luther's theories taken in the lump. One thing that lies at the bottom of Luther's doctrine of the sacraments is that the salvation bestowed by a sacrament is none other than that communicated by the word of the preacher. . . . Nay, the sacrament is merely a particular form in which the Evangel comes to men." But wherever there is faith, there is communion with God, and faith may be wherever there is the Word of God. Just as it was said of the Supper: "*crede et manducasti,*" so also it might be said: "*crede et baptizatus es.*" "To deny this would not merely be to ascribe a magical and mechanical effect to the sacrament, but would also imply the denial of the first principle of all Evangelical Christianity, viz. that for man's salvation nothing further is necessary than to accept in faith the offer of God's grace given him in the

[1] P. 256. [2] Vol. 17, No. 2.
[3] "Deutsch-Ev. Bl.," 32, 1907, p. 651 ff. *Ibid.*, p. 713 ff.

Gospel. In this the Reformation was simply holding to the words of Scripture (Mk. xvi. 16)," where, in the second part (" He that believeth not shall be condemned "), baptism is not mentioned.[1] —Haupt, like Rietschel, draws attention to the fact, that, according to Luther, the unbelieving Christian, in spite of baptism, is inwardly no better than a heathen.[2] Nevertheless Haupt is unwilling to allow that all children of Christian parents should simply be declared members of the Christian Church on account of their birth and regardless of baptism ; for canonical reasons, to be considered Christians, they must be inducted into the congregation by the act of baptism,[3] although it is " a logical outcome of the Reformer's opinions that instances may occur where the Gospel awakens faith, and thereby incorporates in the congregation people who have never been baptised ; but this is the invisible congregation of the ' *vere credentes*,' not the outward, visible, organised Church." In order to enter children into the latter, the parents must express their wish ; this is the meaning of the ceremony of baptism ; the fact remains, that, dismissing the magical effect formerly ascribed to baptism, the principal thing is, " not Christian parentage as such, but the will of the parents as expressed in some way or other."[4]

These vigorous attempts to shelter such ultra-modern views behind Luther's authority, and to make him responsible for consequences of his doctrine, which he had been unwilling to face, have a common ground and starting-point.

Wilhelm Herrmann, the Marburg theologian, in the " Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche," thus expresses himself on the subject.[5] " Christians are becoming more and more conscious," he says, " that a religion which must base its origin on an assent to ' dogmas revealed by God ' is at variance with elements of scholarship which they can no longer deny." He speaks of the " distress of conscience into which the Church, by her demanding assent to revealed doctrine, plunges people as soon as, under the influence of education, they have come to see what alone can induce honest assent to any idea " (viz. the fact " that one evolves it for oneself "). Luther was himself scarcely acquainted with such trouble of conscience concerning faith, notwithstanding the many spiritual troubles he had to endure. On the contrary, he unhesitatingly sought and found a source of strength in supernatural faith. Herrmann continues : " We should be unable to escape from this difficulty had not the true Christian understanding of faith, i.e. of religion, been recovered at the Reformation." From that standpoint " any demand for an assent to revealed doctrine may well be repudiated." For it was the teaching of Luther's Reformation that faith " must be experienced as the gift of God if it is to be the ' *nova et spiritualis vita* ' essentially ' *supra naturam*.' " This, however, could not be required of all. The demand is subversive of faith itself and

[1] P. 651.
[2] " Werke," Erl. ed., 6^2, p. 162. Cp. Rietschel, *ibid.*, p. 274.
[3] P. 653. [4] P. 717. [5] Vol. 18, 1908, p. 148.

"embodies the false Roman principle" that everything depends on the "decision to acquiesce in a doctrine," and not on the "experienced power of a personal life." "To lend a hand and clear a path for the chief discovery of the Reformation is the grandest task of theology within the Protestant Church."[1]

Luther by so incessantly emphasising personal religious experience and by his repudiation of all objective ecclesiastical authority capable of putting before mankind the contents of faith, certainly came very near that which is here represented as the "chief discovery" of the innovations undertaken by him (see above, pp. 403, vol. iii., 8 ff.). But what would the Wittenberg "lover of the Bible and Apostle of the Word" have said to the claim of modern scholars who wish simply to surrender revelation? The passages in which he so indignantly censures the unbelief of his day cannot but recur to one.[2]

Luther arbitrarily reduced the sacraments to two; "there remain," he says, "two sacraments; baptism and the Supper."[3] With regard to Penance his attitude was wavering and full of contradiction. In later years he again came nearer to the Catholic teaching, arguing that Penance must also be a sacrament because, as he said in 1545, "it contains the promise of and belief in the forgiveness of sins."[4] He had much at heart the retention of confession and absolution under some shape or form as a remedy against the moral disorders that were creeping in.[5] Yet, according to him, Penance was only to be regarded as the "exercise and virtue of baptism,"[6] so that the number of the sacraments underwent no actual increase.

Here, as everywhere else, the changeableness of Luther's

[1] The better to understand the strange (though by no means unique) attitude of this professor of theology, see the "Zeitschr. für Theol. und Kirche," 18, pp. 228 ff., 389 ff., and more particularly 74 ff., where he defends his proposals for the remedy of the "lamentable state of present-day Protestantism"; also 17, 1907, pp. 1 ff., 315 ff.—On the above question see also Ernst Bunge, "Der Lehrstreit über die Kindertaufe innerhalb der Lutherischen Kirche," Cassel, 1900, with Preface by Ad. Stöcker.

[2] Cp. above, vol. ii., p. 398 ff.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 508; Erl. ed., 30, p. 371 in "Vom Abendmal Christi Bekentnis," 1528.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 173: "Widder die xxxii. Artikel der Teologisten von Löven." Cp. Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 2^2, p. 247.

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 507; Erl. ed., 30, p. 371. Cp. p. 582 ff.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 508=371. In the passage, Erl. ed., 21, p. 140, immediately after the portion of the sentence cited by Köstlin: "The third sacrament which has been called Penance," there follows: "Which is nothing else but baptism; for," etc.

doctrinal opinions is deserving of notice. The numerous instances where he relinquishes a position previously held and virtually betakes himself to another, are scarcely to the credit either of his logic or of his foresight. Such wavering and groping hither and thither is the stamp of error. In the "Histoire des variations" which might be written on the fate of Luther's views even during his lifetime, much would be found truly characteristic of them.

One sacramentarian doctrine, which to the end of his life he would never consent to relinquish, was, as we know, the Presence of Christ in the Supper. And relentless as he was in combating the Sacrifice of the Mass (see below, p. 506 ff.), yet he insisted steadfastly on the literal acceptance of Christ's words of institution: "This is My Body."

His Teaching on the Supper.

Luther's retention of the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist may to some extent be explained by the influence which, side by side with the Bible, tradition and the authority of the Church still exercised over him, at least on such points as did not call for modification on account of his new doctrine of Justification. He had grown up in this faith, and was accustomed to give practical proof of it even when on other scores he had already broken with the Church. In this matter Scripture presented no difficulty. Had he shared Zwingli's rationalistic leanings it is likely that, like him, he might have sought for some other interpretation of the words of institution than the obvious and literal one. It is also possible that the mysticism to which he was addicted in early years may have contributed to make him acknowledge the "*mysterium tremendum*" of the Sacrament, as he terms it in the language of olden days.

It is true there came a time—according to him the year 1519–1520—when he felt strongly tempted to throw the Sacrament overboard, because, as he says in the well-known words, "I could thus have given a great smack in the face to Popery." At that time I "wrestled and struggled and would gladly have escaped." But from the plain text of the Bible, he had, so he declares, been unable to free himself. This statement, which is on the whole worthy of

belief, we find in " Eyn Brieff an die Christen zu Straspurg " which he published in 1525, and it is further corroborated by the fact, that he there refers to two men who had been anxious to move him to the denial of the Presence of Christ, but who had failed to convince him. The two, whose names he does not mention, were probably Cornelius Hendriks Hoen, a Dutchman, and Franz Kolb of Baden, whose letters to Luther, in 1522 and 1524, trying to induce him to accept the Zwinglian sense of the Sacrament, still exist.[1]

When Carlstadt began his attack on the Real Presence, this, in view of the then situation, so Luther declares in his letter to the people of Strasburg, merely " confirmed his opinion." " Even had I not believed it before, I should at once have known that his opinions were nought, because of his worthless, feeble stuff, devoid of any Scripture and based only on reason and conceit." Offended vanity and annoyance with Carlstadt were here not without their effect on Luther ; to deny this would argue a poor acquaintance with Luther's psychology. It is true that the arguments of his opponent were very weak ; it was not without reason that Luther speaks of his " stuff and nonsense " and " ridiculous tales." He ranks the objections of the two letter-writers mentioned above higher than the proofs adduced by Carlstadt ; at least they " wrote more skilfully and did not mangle the Word quite so badly." Luther was, however, tactless enough to give the Strasburgers a glimpse of the secondary motives which led him to defend the Presence of Christ so strongly and defiantly from that time forward. He complains that Carlstadt was making such an ado as though he wanted " to darken the sun and light of the Evangel," so " that the world might forget everything that had been taught them by us [by Luther] hitherto." " I have up till now managed well and rightly in all the main points, and whoever says the contrary has no good spirit ; I trust I shall not spoil it in the matter of the externals on which alone prophets such as these lay stress."[2]

It is unnecessary to show anew here how Luther's later defence of the Real Presence in the Eucharist against the Zwinglians contains indubitable evidence in its virulence

[1] Dec. 15, 1524, " Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 394 ; Erl. ed., 53, p. 274 (" Briefwechsel," 5, p. 83). On the pair, see Enders, " Briefwechsel," 3, p. 412.

[2] P. 393 f.=273 f.

that Luther felt hurt. This personal element is, however, quite insufficient for one to base upon it any suspicion as to the genuineness of his convictions.

If, on the other hand, we consider the strange and arbitrary form he gave to the doctrine of the Supper, more particularly by insisting that the sole aim and effect of communion is to inspire faith in the personal forgiveness of sins, then his belief in the presence of Christ appears to a certain extent to harmonise with his peculiar theological views. Amidst the storm of his struggle after certainty of salvation the pledge of it which Christ bestows in the Sacrament seems to him like a blessed anchor. That this Body was " given " for us, and this blood shed for us, and that the celebration is in memory of the saving death of Christ, as the very words of institution declare, was frequently brought forward by him as a means to reassure anxious souls. The need of strengthening our faith should, according to him, impel us to receive the Sacrament.

He demands accordingly of others the same traditional faith in the Eucharist in which he found his own stay and support. While clinging to the literal interpretation of the words of the Bible, he, as we already know, is quite ready to appeal to the " dear Fathers " and to the whole of the Church's past, at least when thereby he hopes to make an impression.[1] To such lengths does he go in the interests of the confirmation of faith to which he strives to attain by means of this indispensable Sacrament.

He overlooks the fact, however, that his view of the Supper, according to which its only purpose is to be a sign for the stimulating of saving faith, in reality undermines the doctrine of the Real Presence. True to his theory of the Sacrament and of faith he reduces the Supper to an outward sign destined to confirm the forgiveness of sins. One might ask : If it is merely a sign, is so sublime a mystery as the Real Presence at all called for ? And, if it is a question of assurance, how can we be rendered secure of our salvation by something which is so far removed above the senses as the belief in the Real Presence of Christ, or by an act which makes such great demands on human reason ? Luther's theory requires a sign which should appeal to the senses and vividly remind the mind of the Redemption and thus

[1] Above, p. 410.

awaken faith. This is scarcely the case in the Eucharist where Christ is invisibly present and only to be apprehended by "the Word." If bread and wine are merely to call forth a remembrance of Christ which inspires faith, then the Zwinglian doctrine of the Sacrament fulfils all that is required. Luther does not face this difficulty, but Protestants were not slow to urge it against him.[1]

A peculiarity of Luther's teaching on the Sacrament is to be found in his two theories of Impanation and Ubiquity. Impanation, viz. the opinion that the substance of the bread persists in the Sacrament and that Christ is present together with the bread, served him as a means to escape the Catholic doctrine of a change of substance (Transubstantiation). With the help of the theory of Ubiquity which affirmed the presence everywhere of the Body of Christ, he fancied he could extricate himself from certain difficulties raised by opponents of the Sacrament. The

[1] K. Jäger ("Luthers religöses Interesse an seiner Lehre von der Realpräsenz," Giessen, 1900) examines the writings dating from the period previous to the Sacramentarian controversy and rightly comes to the conclusion, first, that Luther had above all an ethical interest in regarding as he did the Sacrament of the Altar as a means of strengthening faith by making known the redeeming death of Christ; secondly, that he held fast to the Real Presence on the strength of the traditional faith of the Church without going any deeper into its grounds. Faith in the Real Presence was, however, no suitable means of strengthening the certainty of salvation, because the Presence there does not appeal to the senses nor does it serve as a sign of the forgiveness of sins as Luther supposed. To postulate it primarily on the authority of the Church was to contradict the principles of Lutheransim.—P. 27: According to Luther, by partaking of it we are to be convinced in a "peculiarly vivid and lively manner of God's Grace." The partaking of these "signs" was, according to Luther, necessary for us, "because we are still living in sin and our certainty of salvation is ever exposed to attack, and it is useful or suitable because here the Grace of God is offered to each man in a manner that appeals to the senses. Thus the assurance arising from sensible perception is to serve to strengthen and support religious certainty of salvation." "This is the sole religious importance that can be attributed to the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ." Nevertheless, "from that very point of view of the religious interest involved in the Supper, which we have seen above to be Luther's main concern (p. 28), we are forced to deny the Real Presence." "What is to strengthen our faith in God's grace must not itself be the object of faith, but, as is evident, must force itself upon our mind by a higher certainty, or to speak more correctly, by a clearer certainty, such as attaches to sensible perception. . . . A fact which in the last instance itself calls for confirmation, and which in every instance is perceptible only to faith, cannot reasonably serve to support another fact which is of the utmost importance to our life of faith."

history of both opinions presents much that is instructive. Here, however, we shall consider only the second, viz. the ubiquity of Christ's Body.

The theory of the omnipresence of the Body of Christ which Luther reached together with his doctrine of the Supper, like his other theory of the faith of infants, shows plainly not only of how much his imagination was capable, but also what curious theses he could propound in all calmness and serenity. Thus we hear him asserting that the Redeemer, the Lord of Creation, is present, in His spiritualised Body, everywhere and penetrates all things! He is present bodily at the right hand of God according to the Scriptures; but the right hand of God is everywhere, hence also in the consecrated Bread and Wine lying on the altar; consequently the Body and Blood of Christ must be there too.[1] To the question how this comes about, he replies: "It is not for us to know," nor does reason even understand how God can be in every creature.

Much more important is it, so he says, that we should learn to seize, grasp and appropriate this ever-present Christ. "For though Christ is everywhere present, He does not everywhere allow Himself to be seized and laid hold of. . . . Why? Because it is one thing for God to be present and another for Him to be present *to you*. He is present to you then when He pledges His Word to it and binds Himself by it and says: Here you shall find Me. When you have His Word for it, then you can truly seize Him and say: Here I have Thee, as Thou hast said."[2] In this way Christ assures us of His presence in the Sacrament, and invites us, so Luther teaches, to partake of Him in the Bread of the Supper. This, however, is practically to explain away the presence of Christ in the Bread (to which Luther adheres so firmly) and to dissolve it into a purely subjective apprehension. Nevertheless, at least according to certain passages, he was anxious to see the Sacrament adored and did not hesitate to do so himself.[3]

To the belief that Christ's Body is truly received in Communion he held fast, as already stated, till the end of his life.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 143; Erl. ed., 30, p. 65, in the writing "Das diese Wort Christi 'Das ist mein Leib etce.,' noch fest stehen," 1527.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 151=69. [3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 341.

The report, that, in the days of extreme mental tension previous to his last journey to Eisleben, he abandoned the doctrine of the Real Presence, hitherto so passionately advocated, in order to conciliate the Zwinglians or Melanchthonians, is a fable, put into circulation by older Protestant writers.[1] In view of the proofs, met with up to the very last, of his belief to the contrary, we may safely dismiss also the doubtful account to be mentioned directly which seems to speak in favour of his having abandoned it.

Luther's "Kurtz Bekentnis" of September, 1544, certainly was true to his old standpoint and showed that he wished "the fanatics and enemies of the Sacrament, Carlstadt, 'Zwingel,' Œcolampadius, Stinkfield [Schwenkfeld] and their disciples at Zürich, or wherever else they be, to be sternly condemned and avoided."[2] In his last sermon at Wittenberg on Jan. 17, 1546, he warned his hearers against reason, that "fair prostitute and devil's bride," and, indirectly, also against the Sacramentarians and those who attacked his doctrine of the Supper. George Major relates that when he was sent, on Jan. 10, 1546, by Luther to the religious conference at Ratisbon he found scribbled on his door these words: "Our professors must be examined on the Supper of the Lord"; Luther also admonished him not to endeavour to conceal or pass over in silence belief in the Real Presence. On his journey Luther said much the same in the sermons he delivered at Halle and Eisleben; even in his last sermon at Eisleben we find the Sacramentarians described as seducers of mankind and foes of the Gospel.[3]

That Luther changed his opinion is the purport of a communication, which, after his death, Melanchthon is said to have made to A. R. Hardenberg, a friend of his. Hardenberg speaks of it in a document in his own handwriting preserved in the Bremen municipal archives. There he certainly affirms that Melanchthon had told him how that Luther, before his last journey, had said to him: People have gone too far in the matter of the Supper; he himself had often thought of writing something so as to smooth things down and thus allow the Church again to be reunited; this, however, might have cast doubts on his doctrine as a whole; he preferred therefore to commend the case to God; Melanchthon and the others might find it possible to do something after his death.[4]—Evidently it is our duty to endeavour to understand and explain this account, however grounded our suspicions may be. One recent Protestant writer has justly remarked: "There must be something behind Hardenberg's testimony"[5]; and another, that it "cannot be simply set aside."[6]

J. Hausleiter, in 1898, seems to have given the most likely

[1] See the passages of Buchholzer and Trabe, two Protestants, in Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 694.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 397. [3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 616.

[4] Cp., the reprint in Köstlin-Kawerau.

[5] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 616. [6] F. Loofs, "DG.,"[4] p. 863.

explanation of it :[1] After Luther's death Amsdorf complained bitterly that the Wittenberg edition of Luther's German works, then in the press, had not preserved the real Luther undefiled ; he pointed out, that, in the second volume, Luther's violent attack on the Sacramentarians had been omitted where (at the end of the work " Das diese Wort Christi ' Das ist mein Leib, etce.,' noch fest stehen," 1527) he had said that the devil with the help of Bucer and his denial of the Sacrament had " smeared his filth " over Luther's books ; that Bucer was a " sly, slippery, slimy devil " ; where Luther had spoken of Bucer's " poisonous malice, murderous stabs and arch-scoundreldom," thanks to which he had " defiled, poisoned and defamed " Luther's teaching, and where a protest was registered against the assertion that " to begin with," Philip too had taught the same as the Sacramentarians, viz. that there is " nothing but bread in the Lord's Supper."[2] It was known that those pages had been suppressed in the new edition at Luther's own hint. This was stated by George Rörer, Luther's former assistant, who supervised the correction. He said, " he did this with the knowledge and by the request and command of Luther, because M. Bucer, who had there been so severely handled as a notable enemy of the Sacrament, had since been converted." Of any real conversion of Bucer there can be no question, but as he was then doing good work at Ratisbon in the interests of the new Evangel it may be that Luther—perhaps moved thereto by his Electer at the instance of the Landgrave of Hesse—consented to display such indulgence. This may well have formed the subject of the communication Hardenberg received from Melanchthon, only that the one or the other, or possibly both, in the interests of the movement hostile to Luther's Sacramental teaching, distorted and exaggerated the facts of the case, and thus gave rise to the legend of Luther's change of views.

Support for it may also have been seen in the circumstance that Luther, in spite of Melanchthon's defection on the doctrine of the Sacrament, never broke off his relations with him. In his severe " Kurtz Bekentnis " (1544) he forbore from attacking Melanchthon either openly or covertly. Even in 1545, in the Preface to his own Latin works, Luther bestowed his well-known eulogy on Melanchthon's " *Loci theologici.*"[3] It has been pointed out elsewhere that the services his friend rendered him had been and continued to be too important to allow of Luther's breaking with him.[4]

Though Luther was unflinching in his advocacy of the Presence of Christ together with his pet theories of Impanation and Ubiquity, yet he waged an implacable war on the

[1] " N. kirchl. Zeitschr.," 9, p. 831 ff. ; 10, p. 455 ff.

[2] " Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 279 f. ; Erl. ed., 30, p. 147 ff. : " I, innocent man, am made the devil's scavenger. . . . There was really no need so to defame my beloved book behind my back."

[3] " Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 15.

[4] Above, vol. iii., p. 346 ff.

Sacrifice of the Mass. As, however, we have reserved this for later consideration we shall here only point out, that both his doctrine and his practice with regard to the Sacrament of the Altar suffered by his unhappy opposition to the Mass in which it is celebrated and offered, even more so than by the modifications he had already introduced into the older doctrine.

Invocation of the Saints.

Among those doctrines of the Church from which Luther cut himself adrift only little by little and at the expense of a wrench, must be numbered those dealing with the invocation of the Saints and with Purgatory.

The grand and inspiring belief of the Church in the Communion of Saints, which weaves a close and common band between the living and those souls who have already passed into heaven and those, again, who are still undergoing purification, had at first taken deep root in Luther's mind. Later on, however, the foundations of this doctrine became more and more undermined, partly owing to his theories on the Church and the Mediatorship of Christ, partly and even more so by his ardent wish to strike a deadly blow at the practical life of the Catholic Church and all that "Popish" worship had erected on this particular doctrine. Veneration of the Saints and intercession for the dead loomed very large among the religious practices dear to the Christian people, though, at that time, they were disfigured by abuses. Luther adroitly used the abuses as a lever for his work.

As late as 1519, in one of his sermons, he urged his hearers to call upon the angels and the Saints; just as on earth one Christian may pray for another and be asked for his prayers, so, as he justly remarks, is it also with the Saints in heaven.[1] In his Church-postils, however, he raises his voice to condemn the "awful idolatry" by which (so he thought) the "trust" which we should repose on God alone was put in the Saints.[2] From that time he never tires of declaring that there was "no text or warrant in Scripture for the worship of the Saints"; all he will sanction is the humble petition to the Saints: "Pray for me."[3] He required the Wittenberg Canons to erase from the liturgical prayers all reference to the intercession of the saints, as mis-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 696; Erl. ed., 21, p. 272. Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 1^2, pp. 253, 371.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 7^2, p. 71 f.

[3] Cp. Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 372.

leading and likely to give offence ;[1] this, in spite of the fact that the liturgical prayers of the Church's earliest days loudly voice the opposite view. The "Sendbrieff von Dolmetzscheñ" of 1530 gives even stronger expression to his abhorrence for all invocation of the Saints. There he says that the light of the Gospel was now so bright that no one could find any excuse for remaining in darkness.[2]

In his Schmalkalden Articles the invocation of Saints has become one of the "abuses of Endchrist" ; for "though the angels in heaven pray for us," so he explains, again reverting to the ancient teaching of the Church, "and also the Saints on earth, and, perhaps, even those in heaven, yet it does not follow that we are to invoke the angels and the Saints."[3]

Mary.

As long as he admitted the invocation of Saints, Luther assigned a prominent place to that of the Blessed Virgin. "She is to be invoked," he writes in 1521, "that God may give and do according to her will what we ask."[4] After he had changed his mind concerning the saints, he was unwilling to allow this any longer.

Owing, however, to the after effects of his Catholic education, here particularly noticeable in him, we meet with many beautiful sayings of his in support of the worship of Mary, although as time went on he grew ever more hostile to it.

"You know," so he says in a sermon published in 1522, "that the honour paid to the Mother of God is so deeply implanted in the heart of man that we dislike to hear it spoken against, but would much rather it were fostered and encouraged."[5]

"O Blessed Mother," he had already said, "O most worthy Virgin, be mindful of us and grant that the Lord may do great things in us also." Such were his words in 1516 in a sermon on the Feast of the Assumption.[6]

In the same year, on the Feast of our Lady's Conception, he

[1] To the Provost, Canons and whole Wittenberg Chapter, Aug. 19, 1523, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 212 : "*Quamvis privato affectui spiritualis viri indulgendum sit, tamen manifestam et publicam religionem in his tolerare non licet propter scandalum ignorantium et infirmorum, qui relicta fide huc adfluunt.*"

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 632 ff. ; Erl. ed., 65, p. 119 ff. Cp. "Conf. Aug.," art. 21, and "Apol.," ad art. 21. Below, p. 501.

[3] Pars II. art. 2, "Symbol. Bücher,"[10] p. 305.

[4] *Ibid.*, 7, pp. 575=45, p. 252. Exposition of the Magnificat.

[5] *Ibid.*, 10, 3, p. 313=15², p. 495. Church-postils, Sermon on Mary's Nativity.

[6] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 79="Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 118. Sermon on the Assumption, Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 1², p. 86.

speaks of her name, which he says is derived from "*stilla maris*," and extols her as the one pure drop in the ocean of the "*massa perditionis*."[1] To his admission here that her conception was immaculate he was still true in 1527, as has already been shown; after 1529, however, the passage containing this admission was expunged when the sermon in question was reprinted.[2] In his home-postils he says of her conception: "Mary the Mother was surely born of sinful parents, and in sin, as we were"; any explanation of the universal belief to the contrary and of his own previous statements he does not attempt.[3]

Owing to his belief in the Divinity of the Son, Luther continued to call Mary the "Mother of God." Even later he shared the Catholic view that Mary by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost and at the birth of the Saviour had been sanctified by God as the instrument of the great mystery of the Incarnation through her Divine Son.[4] He was also firm in accepting the Virginity of the Mother of God as expressed in the Apostles' Creed. Nevertheless, according to his own confession, this appealed to him less than her "wifehood," and when praising her he prefers to dwell on the latter, i.e. on the Virgin's motherhood.[5] Mary was to him ever a Virgin, before, during and after childbirth, and, in the last sermon he delivered at Eisleben before his death, he insists on this perpetual Virginity, says she ever remained a "pure, chaste maid," and praises her humility, because, though a "most pure and most holy Virgin," yet after the birth of her Son, obediently to the Law, she came to the Temple to be purified.[6]

Luther's work on the Magnificat (1521), of which we have already spoken (p. 237, n. 1), marks a turning-point. Although much that it says of the greatness, dignity and virtues of Mary might well be quoted, yet it contains some curiously superfluous warnings, for instance, not to look on Mary as a "helpful goddess."[7] In spite of any abuse which may possibly have mingled with her worship, the Catholic people were well able to distinguish between the veneration and confidence given to her and those acts of worship which belong solely to God. Catholicism allowed full play to the deepest and warmest feelings towards the ideal of the purest of women, without in any way detracting from the exclusive rights of her Divine Son; on the contrary, devotion to the Mother tended only to increase the honour paid to the Son.

His "Exposition of the Magnificat" has frequently been taken as a proof of Luther's great piety. It indeed contains many good thoughts, even apart from those relating to Mary, but in numerous passages the author uses his pen for a highly prejudiced vindication of his new teachings on the state of grace.

It should also be borne in mind that the printers started on the book just before the Diet of Worms, and that it was intended to

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 107; "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 150.
[2] Above, p. 238, n. 1.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 6^2, p. 433.
[4] *Ibid.*, 19^2, p. 29 ff.; 37, p. 71. Köstlin, *ibid.*, 2, p. 135.
[5] Cp., *ibid.*, Erl. ed., 7^2, p. 276.
[6] *Ibid.*, 20^2, 2, pp. 530–532.
[7] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 7, pp. 568, 573 f.; Erl. ed., 45, pp. 245, 250 f.

attract and secure the support of the future rulers of the Saxon Electorate. Luther was also engaged at that time on his exceedingly violent screed against Catharinus, in which he attempts to reveal the Pope in his true character as Antichrist. When, after the Diet of Worms, he continued his work on the Magnificat he was certainly in no mood to compose a book of piety on Mary. The result was that the book became to all intents and purposes a controversial tract, which cannot be quoted as a proof of his piety or serenity of mind during those struggles. Luther's Magnificat is as little a serious work of edification and piety as his exposition of certain of the Psalms, which appeared almost simultaneously and was also directed "against the Pope and the doctrine of men."

In the "Prayer-book" which Luther prepared for the press he retained the "Hail Mary" together with the "Our Father" and the "I believe," but he cut it down to the angel's greeting, as contained in the Bible, and taught that thereby honour was merely to be given God for the grace announced to Mary.[1] He frequently preached, e.g. in 1523, on the wrong use of this prayer.[2]

In the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon, when rejecting the invocation of the Saints, made no exception in favour of Mary. Yet in the "*Apologia*" of the Confession also composed by him, he says, that "Mary prays for the Church," that she is "most worthy of the greatest honour" ("*dignissima amplissimis honoribus*"), but is not to be made equal to Christ, as the Catholics fancied.[3]

Luther did not merely reproach the Catholics for making a goddess of Mary; he even ventured some remarks scarcely to the credit of the Mother of God; for a while, so he says, she had possessed only a small measure of faith and God had sometimes allowed her to waver; such statements were due to his idea that all Christians, in order to preserve a firm faith in their hearts, must ever be waging battle. On these statements, Eck, in his Homilies, was very severe.[4]

An attitude hostile to all the Catholic veneration for Mary is expressed by Luther in a sermon in 1522 on the Feast of our Lady's Nativity, included in his church-postils. It is true that we "owe honour to Mary," he says, rather frigidly, at the very beginning, "but we must take care that we honour her aright." He proceeds to explain that "we have gone too far in honouring her and esteem her more highly than we should." For in the first place we have thereby "disparaged" Christ, the Redeemer, and "by the profound honour paid to the Mother of God derogated from the honour and knowledge of Christ"; secondly, the honour due to our fellow-men and the love of the poor has thereby been forgotten. If it is a question of honouring anyone

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 574 f.
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 59 f. On March 11, 1523.
[3] Müller-Kolde, "Symb. Bücher,"[10] p. 227.
[4] "Hom. de temp.," Aug. Vindel., 1533 ("Opp.," tom. 5, pars 1), fol. 55′.

on account of his holiness, "then we are just as holy as Mary and the other Saints, however great, provided we believe in Christ." That she "has a greater grace," viz. a higher dignity as the Mother of God, "is not due to any merit of hers, but simply because we cannot all be Mothers of God; otherwise she is on the same level with us."[1]

Of the anthem "*Salve Regina*," which is "sung throughout the world to the ringing of great bells," he says, that it was a "great blasphemy against God," for it terms Mary, the mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. "The '*Regina Caeli*' is not much better, since it calls her Queen of Heaven." Why should her prayers have so much value, he asks, as though unaware of the explanations given by so many ecclesiastical writers, particularly by St. Bernard. "Your prayers, O Christian, are as dear to me as hers. And why? Because if you believe that Christ lives in you as much as in her then you can help me as much as she."[2]

In this discourse again he ventures on the calumny on the Catholic veneration of Mary, of which he was to make such frequent use later; it is equivalent to adoration; "To seek to make of Mary an idol, that we cannot and may not do. We will not have her as a mediator, but as an advocate [to this Luther always clung] we will gladly accept her, like the other Saints. But people have put her above all the choirs of angels."[3] Neither here nor elsewhere does he attempt to prove her alleged adoration or the idolatry of the Catholics; when, a little further on, he launches forth against the pilgrimages made by common folk to churches and chapels of our Lady, he is straying from the subject and dealing with a practice of the faithful, quite harmless and wholesome in itself, whatever abuses it may then have involved.

The veneration for the holy Mother of the Redeemer, that high ideal of humility and purity of heart, so devoid of the slightest trace of sensuality, springs from the soil of humility, chastity and pure, unselfish love. Luther's whole mental outlook was not too favourable to such necessary dispositions. His moral character, as exhibited more particularly during the period after his stay at the Wartburg and previous to his marriage, scarcely harmonised with the delicate blossoms of this cultus, nor can we be surprised, looking at it psychologically, that the chief alteration in his views took place just at this time.

That hostile instinct, shared by so many heretics in their attitude towards the most holy of women, outweighed in his soul the vestiges of Catholic feeling he still retained. Malice impelled him to blacken the honour which the people loved to pay to Mary; this he strove to paint as mere idolatry, seeking unceasingly to affix this stigma on Catholicism. Controversy stifled in him the impulse to that pious veneration which he himself had admitted to be so well-founded and so natural.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 113 ff; Erl. ed., 15^2, p. 495 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 321 f.=499.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 325=501.

Purgatory.

In the Schmalkalden Articles the olden doctrine of Purgatory was rejected by Luther as follows: Purgatory, "with all its pomp, worship and traffic, must be held to be nothing more than a mere phantom of the devil," born of "that dragon's tail" the Mass.[1]

Although in this condemnation Luther's customary polemical exaggeration of abuses clearly plays a part, yet from his Indulgence Theses and "Resolutions" down to the sentence in the Articles of Schmalkalden the working of his mind can clearly be traced, expressed as it is, now in rejection on principle, and on theological or biblical grounds, now in opportunist and cynical attacks on the Church's ancient doctrine of Purgatory. The temporal penalties which, according to the teaching of the Church, must be paid by the suffering souls notwithstanding their state of grace, found no place in Luther's new theory of a faith which covered over everything. According to the usual view venial sins also are forgiven in the next world, thanks to the purifying pains of Purgatory. But of venial sins as distinct from grievous sins Luther refused to hear. He had nothing but evasive replies to the objection which presented itself of its own accord, viz. that mortals when they die often seem ripe neither for heaven nor for hell.[2]

At first Luther was content to modify merely the doctrine of Purgatory which is so deeply implanted in the consciousness of the Christian, by denying that it was capable of making satisfaction while nevertheless asserting his belief in the existence of a place of purgation ("*mihi certissimum est, purgatorium esse*");[3] then he devoted himself to countering the many legends and popular tales of the appearance of ghosts, a comparatively easy task.[4] The Pope, he went on to say, had merely made Purgatory an article of faith in order to enrich himself and his followers

[1] Müller-Kolde, *ibid.*, p. 303.

[2] K. Hase, "Hdb. der prot. Polemik," Buch 2, Kapitel 6: "Most mortals are too good for hell, but assuredly not good enough for heaven. We may as well openly admit that there is something not quite clear here in the Protestantism of the Reformation."

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 555; "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 177. Resolutions on the Indulgence Theses. Thesis 15.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 585; Erl. ed., 10^2, p. 354.

by Masses for the Dead, though in fact "it may be that only very few souls go there."

Later he preferred to think, that God had in reality told us practically nothing about the existence or non-existence of Purgatory, or of the condition of the Saints in heaven; the preachers would do well, he says, gradually to wean the people from their practices in this regard; they had merely to decline to discuss the question of the dead and of the Saints in heaven. He was indeed unwilling to sever the close ties, so dear to the Catholic, binding the faithful to the deceased members of his family and to the beloved patterns and heroes of former days, yet his writings do tend in that direction.

From 1522 onward he inclined strongly to the idea that those who passed away fell into a deep sleep, from which they would awaken only on the day of Judgment; those who had breathed their last in the faith of Christ would all, so he fancies, sleep as in Abraham's bosom; but since this depended on the "good pleasure of God," it was not forbidden "to pray for the dead"; the petition must, however, be cautiously worded, for instance, as follows: "I beseech Thee for this soul which may be sleeping or suffering; if it be suffering, I implore Thee, if it be Thy Divine Will, to deliver it." After praying thus once or twice, then "let it be."[1] In 1528 we still meet, in his writings, with similar concessions to the olden teaching and practice.[2]

In 1530, however, his writing "Widderruff vom Fegefeur,"[3] made an end of all concessions; here he is compelled to combat the "shouting and boasting of the Papists," for the "lies and abominations of the sophists with regard to Purgatory" had passed all endurance. He now wants the sleep of the soul to be understood as a state of happy peace, and when it becomes a question of answering the Bible passage alleged by the Catholics, viz. 2 Machabees xii. 45 f., where it is said of the offering made for the fallen, that it is "a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins," Luther simply strikes

[1] Cp., *ibid.*, Erl. ed., 13^2, p. 2 ff.; 15^2, p. 521; 17^2, p. 55.

[2] In the "Bekentnis" also, *ibid.*, Weim. ed., 26, p. 508; in Erl. ed., 30, p. 370, prayer for the dead is left optional.

[3] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 31, p. 184 ff.

out this book from the Canon of Scripture, as indeed he had done even previously ; the Church, so his curious argument ran, could not bestow more authority and force on a book than it possessed of itself, because the sacred books must themselves bear witness to their inspiration.

It would be superfluous to enumerate in detail the other points of theology on which he set himself to oppose the Catholic teaching he had himself in earlier days advocated, sometimes on excellent grounds. We know his exclamation : Were I to teach to-day everything that I formerly taught, particularly in the beginning, then " I should be obliged to worship the Pope." Moreover, not only were there contradictions due to his falling away from doctrines of the Church which he had formerly vindicated, but also many others resulting from his modification of his own views, or implied in his new opinions.

His views on indulgences, satisfaction, penance and contrition, original sin and predestination, on marriage, priestly ordination, spiritual jurisdiction and secular authority, on Councils and the Roman Primacy, have already been dealt with historically in what has gone before. Other points of doctrine will have to be discussed elsewhere in a different connection ; for instance, the far-reaching question of the Church and her visibility and invisibility, and—what is of no less importance for a due appreciation of the man—the end of all and the devil.

One only point, on which indeed Luther opposed the doctrine and practice of the Church with all his heart and soul, must here be considered more closely.

6. Luther's Attack on the Sacrifice of the Mass

All Luther's new doctrines referred to above might be regarded in the light of attacks on the Church's teaching and practice. None of his theological views were put forward by him merely to be discussed in the calm domain of thought. They are always quickened by his hatred of the Church and the antichristian Papacy. This holds good in particular of his antagonism to the sacrificial character of the Mass.

By his violent assault on the Mass he robbed the churches

and public worship of the Holy Sacrifice,[1] and removed the very focus of Divine service in the Church.

Whereas to the Catholic Church the celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar was always a true sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving and atonement, which Christ, as the High Priest, offers to the Eternal Father through the instrumentality of a priest, according to Luther it is merely a memorial on the part of the congregation, which stimulates faith and gives a public testimony to God's glory.[2] In 1538 he characterised the struggle against the Mass as one vital to the new faith ;[3] he was very well aware how closely allied it was with the worship to which he himself had once been devoted : " Had any man twenty years ago tried to rob me of the Mass, I should have come to blows with him."[4]

Sacrifice is the supreme and at the same time the most popular expression of the worship of God. " From the rising of the sun even to the going down," the Prophet Malachias had prophesied (i. 11), " my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation," viz. the Eucharist. The common oblation throughout Christendom formed a sublime bond uniting all the Christian nations of the earth in one holy family. The words of Christ concerning the " Body that is given for you," and " Blood that is shed for you " were rightly regarded as proving both the institution of the common sacrifice and its atoning power.

[1] That a sacrifice had been made of the Mass appeared to him " Idolatry and a shameful abuse," a " twofold impiety and abomination " ; its abomination no tongue could express. " Werke," Weim. ed., 8, pp. 489, 493 ; Erl. ed., 28, pp. 38, 45 f. ; 60, pp. 403 f., 396.

[2] Köstlin, " Luthers Theol.," 2^2, p. 243. There were, however, always some voices raised amongst Protestants to demand that the " Sacrifice and Atonement " under some shape or form should be insisted on more than the sermon. The Presence of Christ, as taught by Luther, although this Presence did not involve a sacrifice, was made use of to oppose any further denuding of worship. " No longer is the Sacrifice and the Atonement which takes place at the Altar to be the centre of Divine worship," Pastor E. Strack wrote in 1904, in " Der alte Glaube," 1903–4, 5, col. 1255, " but, according to modern views, God is merely present in the listening congregation by virtue of the Word preached from the pulpit. Hence the pulpit becomes the central point, the altar an accessory. To this we cannot agree. Without atonement we have no God ; hence no altar either . . . and no pulpit."

[3] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 24 : " *Stante missa Lutherus est damnatus, ruente missa totum fundamentum papæ corruit.*"

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 19 : " *nam ego toto pectore illam adorabam.*" But cp. below, p. 509, n. 2.

Luther not only burst asunder the bond of unity, but also overthrew the altar of sacrifice. It is against the correct idea of Divine worship to deprive it of all sacrifice, and to make its principal object consist in the edification and instruction of the congregation, as Luther decreed. Here again we see Luther's individualism and the stress he laid on the subjective side, even to the extent of robbing religion of the sacrifice of the Lamb, which had the misfortune to be independent of fortuitous piety. The very walls of his temples seemed to utter a chill protest against being given over to a worship so entirely at the mercy of the feelings of the visitor. Luther was against the abuses connected with the Mass, and so were all well-instructed Catholics. But the latter argued, that, in spite of the abuses, the Mass must be honoured as the sacrifice on which the spiritual life rests. To the many contradictions of which he was guilty Luther added a further one, viz. of advocating as a purer and higher worship, one that does not even come up to the true standard of worship. (See vol. v., xxix., 9).

Luther's deep-seated and almost instinctive antipathy to the Sacrifice of the Mass affords us, in its various phases, a good insight into his plan of campaign. On no other point does his hate flame forth so luridly, nowhere else is he so defiant, so contemptuous and so noisy—save perhaps when attacking Popery—as when assailing the Sacrifice of the Mass, that main bulwark of the Papacy. One thing is certain; of all the religious practices sacred to Catholics none was branded by him with such hideous and common abuse as this, the sublimest mystery of faith and of Divine Love.

First Attacks. "*On the Abomination of the Silent Mass.*"

In spite of Luther's assurance given above of his former high regard for the Mass, he must quite early have grown averse to it, probably at the time when his zeal in the religious life first began to flag.

Even in 1516 we learn from his correspondence that he rarely found time for its celebration or for the recitation of the Canonical Hours.[1] At a much later date he lets fall the remark, that he had never liked saying Mass.[2] In view of his disturbed state of soul we can readily credit what he says, viz. that, in the monastery Gabriel Biel's book on the

[1] Above, vol. i., p. 275. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

Mass, in which the dignity of the Holy Sacrifice is extolled with the voices of antiquity, had often made his heart bleed.[1] It is rather curious, that, according to his own account, it was on the occasion of his first Mass after ordination that his morbid state of fear showed itself strongly for the first time.[2] No less remarkable is it that his most extravagant self-reproaches for his past life had reference to his saying Mass. He tells us how, even long after his apostasy, he had often been brought to the verge of despair by the recollection of the terrible sin of saying Mass whereby he had at one time openly defied and offended God. He morbidly persuades himself that he had been guilty of the most frightful idolatry; that, as a priest and monk, he had performed the most criminal of actions, one subversive of all religion, in spite of his having done so in ignorance and in perfect good faith.[3]

In his sermons on the Commandments, published in 1518, we still find a tribute to the Sacrifice of the Mass as Catholics understood it.[4] But in his "Sermon von dem hochwirdigen Sacrament des heyligen waren Leychnams Christi" of 1519 he is curiously reticent concerning the nature of the Mass, whilst expressly recommending and praising the communion of the congregation—under both kinds—as the work of that faith "wherein strength lies."[5]

The first open attack on the Holy Sacrifice was made in his "Sermon von dem newen Testament das ist von der heyligen Messe" (1520). The latter appeared almost simultaneously with his "An den christlichen Adel" and prepared the way for his subversive treatment of the Mass in his "*De captivitate babylonica.*" In the Sermon he

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 18.

[2] Cp. vol. i., p. 15 f. and, besides the references given there, a passage from George Rörer's MS. of the Table-Talk, given by E. Kroker, "Archiv für RG.," 5, 1908, p. 354, where Luther, in a paroxysm of terror at the words of the Canon "*offero tibi Deo vivo æterno* [*sic*]," says: "*Sic perterrefiebam, ut ab altari discedere cogitabam, et fecissem, nisi me retinuisset meus præceptor, quia cogitavi:* Who is He with Whom you are speaking? From that time forward I said Mass with terror, and I am thankful to God that He has released me from it."

[3] On a solemn occasion, at the conclusion of his "Vom Abendmal Christi Bekentnis," in 1528, he has it, that, though he had "spent his youth damnably," yet his having been a monk and his having said Mass had been his greatest sins. See below, p. 524.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 443 ff.; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, pp. 81, 83 *seq.*

[5] *Ibid.*, 2, p. 738 ff.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 25 ff.

declared that it was "almost the worst abuse," that in the older Church the Eucharistic celebration had been turned into a sacrifice to be offered to God.[1] Statements such as these predominate in the virulent chapter devoted to the Mass in the "*De captivitate babylonica*": Christ's sacrifice on the cross had been made out to be insufficient and the Sacrifice of the Mass set up in its place; the Supper was the Lord's work for us, but, by ascribing a sacrificial value to the Mass, it becomes a work of man for God, whereby man hopes to please God.

The close ties connecting the Sacrifice of the Mass with both the Church's ancient traditions and the institution of Christ are here ruthlessly torn asunder. A lurid and grossly exaggerated account of the abuses which had arisen in connection with the money-offerings for Masses served to stimulate the struggle, essentials faring as badly as what was merely accidental.

At the Wartburg the "Spirit" of the place further excited Luther's hatred of the Mass. He poked fun at the "Mass-priest" who served the stronghold and wrote to Melanchthon: "Never to all eternity shall I say another Low Mass."[2] This he says in the same letter which witnesses to his inner contest with the monastic vows, and in which we find the sentence: "Be a sinner and sin boldly but believe more boldly still."[3] At the time of his spiritual baptism in the Wartburg he also wrote both his "*De abroganda missa*" and his "*De votis monasticis*." The former he published in 1522, also in a German version entitled "Vom Missbrauch der Messen."

This was the bugle-call to the struggle he immediately commenced at Wittenberg against the continued celebration of Mass by the Catholic clergy in the Castle and Collegiate churches of the town. We have already treated of the phases of that campaign in which his impetuosity and intolerance manifested itself in all its nakedness.[4] From the inglorious combat, thanks to the help of the mob, he was to come forth victorious. On Christmas Day, 1524, for the first time, there was no Mass, and in the following year Justus Jonas wrote of the completion of the work: "On the

[1] *Ibid.*, 6, p. 364 ff.=27, p. 155 ff.
[2] Aug. 1, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 208.
[3] Above, vol. iii., p. 194 ff. [4] Vol. ii., pp. 88 f., 327 ff.

Saturday after the Feast of St. Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist, the whole Pope . . . was flung out of All Saints' church at Wittenberg, together with the stoles, albs, etc.; the olden ceremonies were replaced by pious ones such as accord with Scripture."[1]

Luther was convinced that the "whole Pope" could not be destroyed throughout the world save by the abolition everywhere of the Mass. "When once the Mass has been put away," he declares in 1522, in his screed against Henry VIII., "then I shall think I have overthrown the Pope completely."[2]

In this writing his consciousness of his mission and his defiant insistence on the new teaching were largely directed against that palladium of the old Church: "Through me Christ has begun to reveal the abomination standing in the Holy Place" (Dn. ix. 27). It is in denying the sacrificial character of the Mass that he uses those odd words of bravado: "Here I stand, here I sit, here I remain, here I defy with contempt the whole assembly of the Papists," etc.[3]

The last act in his warfare on the Mass at the Collegiate church of Wittenberg had been anticipated by Luther's stormy sermon against the Canon of the Mass (Nov. 27, 1524).[4] This identical sermon, taken down by his pupil George Rörer, formed the groundwork of the writing he published in 1525, "Von dem Grewel der Stillmesse so man den Canon nennet."[5]

Here he proceeds on the curious assumption, only to be explained by his perverted enthusiasm, that the mere bringing to light of the Canon (i.e. of the principal part of the Mass, which includes the Consecration and which the priest reads in silence) will suffice to bring about the fall of the whole Eucharistic ritual. The passionate, cynical commentary which he appended to the translation, was, however, far more effective.

The author seems not in the least to realise that the Canon of the Mass is one of the most ancient and most authentic echoes of the early Western Church. It contains sublime religious ideas couched in the simple yet impressive language of the remotest ages of the Church when she was still in touch with classical

[1] To Spalatin, Sep. 23, 1525. Cp. "Briefwechsel des Jonas," 1, p. 94.

[2] See vol. ii., p. 320.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 328.

[5] On Rörer's work and its connection with the wriiting mentioned, see Weim. ed., 18, p. 22 ff.

culture.[1] Yet Luther's opinion is that: "It must have been composed by some unlettered monk."[2]

He concludes the booklet with a specimen of his usual language: "See, there you have heard the holy, silent Mass and now know what it is, that you may stand aghast at it and cross yourself as though you saw the devil as large as life." He exhorts the reader to thank God, that "such an abomination has been brought to light," and "that the great whore of Babylon has been exposed."

At the same time he tells the secular authorities that it is their bounden duty to interfere "by means of the law" against such defamation of the name of God; "for when an impudent rascal openly blasphemes God in the street, or curses and swears, and the authorities permit it, they become in the sight of God partners in his wickedness. And if in some regions it is forbidden to curse or swear, much more just were it that the secular lords should here do something to prevent and to punish, because such blaspheming and defaming in the Mass is quite as public and as open as when a knave blasphemes in the street. If one is punishable, the other is surely no less so."[3]

Thus Luther's attacks on the Mass in a fatal way became one of the quicksands on which the theory of freedom of conscience and worship which he had put forth at the commencement suffered shipwreck.[4] Even in the question of the Mass at Wittenberg he had formerly insisted, in opposition to Carlstadt's violent proceedings, that no religious compulsion should be exercised; this he did, for instance, in the sermons he preached against Carlstadt's undertaking and particularly in that on Low Masses,[5] where he declared that faith cannot he held captive or bound, that each one must see for himself what is right or wrong and is not simply to fall in with the "general opinion or to yield to compulsion." His words were an honourable declaration in favour of freedom of conscience. And now, in his warfare against his fantastic caricature of the Mass, not theoretically only but in practice too (for besides Wittenberg, there was also Altenburg and Erfurt)[6] he placed the Mass, the most sacred centre of the Church's worship, on a level with criminal deeds and invited the

[1] F. Probst, "Die Liturgie der drei ersten Jahrh.," 1870, p. 349 ff. P. Drews, "Zur Entstehungsgesch. des Kanons der röm. Messe," 1902, p. 39 ff. F. X. Funk, "Über den Kanon." ("Hist. Jahrb.," 24, 1903), pp. 62 ff., 283 ff. (against Drews). A. Baumstark, "Liturgia romana e liturgia dell' esarcato, Origini del canon missæ romanæ," 1904 (see "Hist. Jahrb.," 25, 1904, p. 859; cp., *ibid.*, 31, 1910, p. 596). P. Drews, "Untersuchungen über die sog. klementinische Liturgie," 1 Tl., 1907 (see "Hist. Jahrb.," 28, 1907, p. 166). N. Gihr, "Das hl. Messopfer "[10], 1907.

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 119, in 1540.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 36; Erl. ed., 29, p. 132 f.

[4] Cp. vol. ii., p. 311.

[5] Köstlin, "Luthers Theol.," 1[2], p. 338. "Werke," Erl. ed., 28, pp. 216 ff., 258 ff.

[6] Vol. ii., pp. 326 ff., 336 ff.

magistrates to treat it as a sacrilege, since it was the duty of authority "to check all outbreaks of wickedness."[1]

When Johann Eck took up his pen to refute Luther's "Von dem Grewel der Stillmesse" he felt it almost superfluous to prove how unfounded the latter's assertions were, that, by the sacrifice of the Mass, Catholics "denied in deed and in their heart that Christ had blotted out sin"[2] by His Sacrifice on Golgotha, or that they maintained, that, not the merits of Christ, but rather "our works, must effect this."[3] He enters at greater length into the theological proofs of the truly sacrificial character of the consecration and of the correctness and value of the Canon, supplementing the biblical passages on the Sacrifice of the New Covenant by the clear and definite witness of tradition.[4]

He and his Catholic readers were, however, quite prepared to find Luther refusing even to listen to such proofs taken from tradition. "Ah, bah, tradition this way, tradition that!" he had already cried, with regard to this very question, when striving to shake himself free of the fetters of the Church's doctrine.

Eck, however, also attacked Luther from another point. Luther had placed in the very forefront of his writing the assertion, that he had never advised the people to have recourse to violent measures, whether with regard to the Mass or the Catholic worship generally, or invited them to revolt; in the preface Eck accordingly promises to take him to task both concerning the Canon and for his responsibility in the rising. "I shall, please God, prove Luther a liar on both counts." He convicts him of inciting to revolt on the strength of "five proofs" taken from various works of his.

The pecuniary aspect of the Mass supplied Luther and the preachers with an effective means of exciting the people which they were not slow to seize. The abuses, real or apparent, of the system of Mass-stipends, were worked to their utmost by the demagogues.

[1] After Köstlin (*ibid.*, p. 340), who quotes from "Werke," Erl. ed., 22, p. 49 (Weim. ed., 8, p. 687 f.), Luther's passage against the Princes, who allow everything to slide: they ought to draw the sword, not indeed to "put the priests to death," but to "forbid by word and then put down by force whatever they do that is over or against the Gospel."

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 29; Erl. ed., 29, p. 124.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 33=129.

[4] "Auf Luthers Greuel wider die heilige Stillmess Antwort," 1525.

In Luther's extravagant language the Sacrifice of the Mass is simply made to appear a rich field for vulgar greed of gain, discovered and exploited by the Papists because it filled their pockets. The amount brought in by Masses for the Dead was chiefly to blame for the spread of the Mass. "This invention [Masses for the Dead] has been worth money to them," he cries, "so that they need not say Mass for nothing."[1] "At All Saints', here at Wittenberg, the money is godlessly thrown away [by foundation-Masses, annual commemorations, etc.]; the three Mass-priests there, 'three pigs or paunches,'" celebrate it "in the house of infamy simply because they worship money."[2]

Many of the apostles of the new faith preached in the same strain as Luther. Others, as Stephen Agricola for instance states he did, were content to scourge "the great superstition and hindrance to the true honour of God," i.e. the abuses. Agricola, if we may trust him, "was loath to see Masses for the dead said for money, as this should be done out of pure charity."[3] When, later, Flacius Illyricus made similar charges against the Catholics on the pretext of the alms given for Masses, the Dominican, Johann Fabri, replied: "What do you sectarians do gratis? People can never give enough for your preaching, your psalm-singing, your Supper, etc., so that yearly a very large sum has to be spent on your support. . . . Why then do you abuse the poor priests who take payment for their work and unkindly twit them for saying Mass solely for money? What answer would you make were I to say: You too, Illyricus, preach for the sake of money?"[4]

The charges of self-seeking and avarice had, however, in some places so strong an effect as to lead to popular risings against the celebration of Mass. This recalls the account given by Erasmus of the ready success he had noticed attended the addresses of the preachers: "The Mass has been abolished," he writes, "but what more holy thing has been set in its place? . . . Their churches I have never entered. I have occasionally seen those who listened to their sermons come out like men possessed, with anger and fury writ large upon their faces. . . . They walked like warriors who have just been harangued by their general. When have their sermons ever produced penance and contrition? Do they not devote most of their time to abuse of the clergy and their lives? . . . Are risings rare amongst these evangelicals? And do they not resort to violence on the slightest provocation?"[5]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 31; Erl. ed., 29, p. 126.

[2] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 527.

[3] Cp. "Hist. Jahrb.," 12, 1891, p. 776, where N. Paulus quotes for the first time a memorandum (1523) of Johann Staupitz against Stephen Agricola, which corroborates his statement mentioned before (*ibid.*, p. 309 ff.), that Staupitz was quite Catholic in his views on matters of faith.

[4] "Antwort auf das . . . Geschwetz M. Flaccii Illyrici," 1558, p. 121 f. Quoted by Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 776.

[5] "Opp.," 10, col. 1578 *seq.* Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1, p. 13 f.

The peaceable union of Christians before the Altar of Sacrifice in the "Mystery of Faith" had made way for warfare. The absence of the sacrifice avenged itself, however, in the Churches given over to the new religion by the dreariness and utter desolation of the sacred buildings once so full of life; not to mention the dreadful controversies, the bare "ministry of the Word" and the one-sided effort to make of the Supper simply a source of edification and increase of faith, could not suffice to attract the multitude to the Eucharistic celebration. The great sacrifice, which by its own infinite worth and quite independently of its power to edify, glorifies God in His Temple, and so powerfully stimulates the faithful to unite their offering with the sacramental oblation, had been torn from the midst of the congregation.

If we seek here for the connecting link between Luther's bitter hostility to the Mass and his system as a whole, we shall find, that, granted the doctrine of the imputation of the merits of Christ by faith alone, the Eucharistic Sacrifice had no real place left. Luther said in 1540: "Where the '*locus*' ['*iustificationis*'] is rightly taught and stands, there can be nothing evil; for the *antecedens*, 'faith alone justifies,' spells the fall of the Mass," etc.[1]

In the new faith everything turned on the saving and the pacification of the sinner by virtue of a sort of amnesty furnished by the merits of Christ's death on the cross. Faith alone secures all the fulness of the Redeemer's work of satisfaction; no ordinance of Christ, sacrament, sacrifice or priesthood can assist in the work of clothing the soul with the mantle of these Divine merits; anything of the sort would only diminish the dignity and the efficacy of the confidence of faith. Only what promotes the personal faith which saves—that master-key to the forgiveness, or better, to the cloaking of sin—is here admitted, but no work, no "*opus operatum*" of Christ's institution, which, through sacrament and sacrifice, imparts grace to the faithful Christian who is duly prepared to seek salvation; on the contrary, according to Luther, such institutions, which the ancient Church looked upon as sacred, only detract from the merits of Christ.

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 236.

And since, in his view, every Christian by his faith is a priest, the hierarchy falls, and thus sacrifice too, at least as the prerogative of a special sacerdotal class, also ceases to exist.

Hence the warfare on behalf of the Evangel of faith alone and against sacerdotalism, naturally, and of necessity, led to the warfare against the Mass. This particular combat, in which (as in the attack on the Church's visible head, viz. the Pope) Luther's animosity against the Catholics reached its culminating point, necessarily occupied a place in the forefront, because the Mass, which united the congregation before the altar, was the most public and most tangible expression of Catholic life and the one most frequently seen.

Luther's theological perversions of the Church's doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass, in the above works and elsewhere, are all the more astonishing, seeing that Gabriel Biel, the theologian, with whom he was so well acquainted and whose "*Sacri canonis missæ expositio*" he had studied with keen interest, had, in his exposition of the ancient doctrine of the Mass, forestalled these very misrepresentations, almost as though he had actually foreseen them.[1] The respected Tübingen University-Professor, in this explanation of the Mass, which appeared in 1488, was frequently reprinted, and was much used by both parish clergy and preachers, insists, in close unison with the past, that there was but one great and atoning sacrifice of the cross, and that the sacrifice of the Mass did not in the least detract from it but rather applied it to the individual believer. He points out with great emphasis the uniquely sublime character of the sacrifice on Calvary ("*unica oblatio et perfectissimum sacrificium*"), in its fourfold aspect as a sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving, petition and atonement. In support of this he quotes a number of passages from the Bible: "By it [the sacrifice on the cross] our sins are blotted out (Romans iv.). Through it we have found grace whereby we are saved (Hebrews v.): for, being consummated

[1] For this excellent work, which for the most part reproduces the lectures of Magister Egeling Becker, see A. Franz, "Die Messe im deutschen MA.," Freiburg, 1902, pp. 542–554. The comprehensive "*Expositio*," comprising 51 "signatures," consists of 89 Lectures addressed to the clergy. Franz characterises it as "a work which, by its theological thoroughness and its moderately ascetical views, was calculated to promote learning amongst the clergy and render them more worthy of exercising their greatest and finest privilege" (p. 554).

by suffering, He (Christ) became to all who obey Him the cause of eternal life. By the one oblation of the cross He hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified (Hebrews x.)," etc. " If you seek the blotting out of sins, behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; if you seek thanksgiving, Christ gives thanks to the Father; if you seek for deliverance from evil, He heals and sets us free."[1] In several passages he dwells in detail on the idea of the saving Lamb of God, once in connection with the thrice-repeated *Agnus Dei* of the Mass.

But, a comparatively short time after, another was to come, who would assert that the world had long ago lost the Lamb of God, and who presumed to take upon himself the task of pointing Him out anew to all men and of making Him profitable to souls.

In unison with Fathers and theologians, Biel sums up the mutual relations between the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacrifice on the Cross in the words: " Although Christ was once only offered visibly in the flesh, yet He is daily offered concealed under the appearances of bread and wine, though painlessly, for the Sacrifice of the Mass is the representation and memorial of the sacrifice consummated on the Cross and produces the same effects."[2]

[1] Lectio 85, F.

[2] *Ibid.*: " *Quamvis autem semel oblatus est Christus in aperta carnis effigie, offertur nihilominus quotidie in altari velatus,*" etc. Of the numerous witnesses to the ancient belief of the Church, Joh. Ernest Grabe notes in his Oxford edition of Irenæus (1702) with regard to a statement of his on this subject (4 c. 17, al. 33): " What Irenæus here teaches of the sacrificial character of the Eucharist, Ignatius and Justin taught before him, and Tertullian and Cyprian after. It is clearly vouched for in Clement of Rome's Epistle to the Corinthians." " There is no doubt that Irenæus and the other Fathers, both those who had seen the Apostles, as well as their immediate successors, regarded the Eucharist as the Sacrifice of the New Law, and . . . presented at the altar the consecrated elements of Bread and Wine to God the Father in order to figure the bloody Sacrifice which He Himself had offered on the cross in His flesh and Blood, and in order to obtain the fruits of His death for all for whom it was offered." Gregory the Great taught with antiquity (Hom. 37 in Evang. c. 7): " *Quoties ei (Deo) hostiam suæ passionis offerimus, toties nobis ad absolutionem nostram passionem illius reparamus,*" and in his Dialogues, which contributed greatly to the high esteem of Masses for the dead (we are here considering the doctrine, not the legends), he says of the Sacrifice of the Mass: " *Hæc singulariter victima ab æterno interitu animam salvat, quæ illam nobis mortem Unigeniti per mysterium reparat. . . . Pro nobis iterum in hoc mysterio sacræ oblationis immolatur* " (" Dial.," 4, 58; cf. 59). The well-known Lutheran theologian Martin Chemnitz

When describing more minutely its efficacy for the obtaining of grace and forgiveness of sins he dwells on the thought, that it has no quasi-magical effect, but acts "according to man's preparation and capacity," so that the Holy Sacrifice does not by any means blot out sin if man's heart is still turned away from God: to souls that show themselves well-disposed it brings contrition and sorrow for sin and finally forgiveness.[1] Unlike Baptism and Penance, it does not reconcile the soul with God directly, but only indirectly, by arousing the spirit of penance which leads to the wholesome use of the sacraments and appeases the anger of the Heavenly Father by the offering of His Son, and prevents Him withdrawing the help of His grace. Biel elucidates the idea of sacrifice, deals with the figurative sacrifices of the Old Testament, which found their fulfilment in the clean oblation (Mal. i. 10 f.) to be offered from the rising of the sun even to the going down, with the twofold efficacy of the Mass ("*ex opere operato*" and "*ex opere operante*")[2] and many other points which Luther unjustly attacks; with the lawfulness of private Masses, with or without any Communion of the faithful, with the advantage of Masses for the souls of the faithful departed, with Mass-stipends[3] which he defends against the charge of simony, and with the practice of repeating silently certain portions of the Mass, an ancient usage for which he gives the reasons.[4]

"*On the Corner-Mass.*" *Continuation of the Conflict.*

In his war against the Mass Luther was never to yield an inch. His "Von dem Grewel der Stillmesse" was followed

wrote in his "Examen concilii Tridentini" (1565–1573), that it could not be denied that the Fathers, when speaking of the celebration of the Supper, make use of expressions descriptive of Sacrifice, such as "*sacrificium*," "*immolatio*," "*oblatio*," "*hostia*," "*victima*," "*offerre*," "*sacrificare*," "*immolare*" (t. 2, p. 782). Cp. J. Döllinger, "Die Lehre von der Eucharistie in den ersten drei Jahrh.," 1826. J. A. Möhler, "Symbolik," §§ 34 and 35.

[1] Lectio 85, under L.: "*Si eos dispositos inveniat, eis gratiam obtinet virtute illius unius sacrificii, a quo omnis gratia in nos influxit, et per consequens peccata mortalia in eis delet . . . in quantum gratiam contritionis eis impetrat.*" [2] Lectio 26, under F. [3] Lectio 28.

[4] *Ibid.*, L. 17 (E.). Master Egeling discusses this even more in detail. Franz says (*ibid.*, p. 548), speaking of Egeling's MS., of which he makes use: "The remarkable length at which he vindicates the Church's rule that the Canon be recited silently is not without significance. It would appear that this gave offence to the people." Luther seized upon this popular prejudice as a weapon in his war on the Mass.

by fresh pronouncements and writings which bear witness to the intensity of his hatred.

The occasion for another lengthy writing against the Mass and the hierarchy seems to have been furnished in 1533 by the religious conditions in the province of Anhalt, where the Princes, under pressure from their Catholic neighbours, had begun to tolerate the former worship and the saying of Mass. In Dec. of that year Luther published his booklet "Von der Winckelmesse und Pfaffen Weihe."[1]

It was designed primarily as a protest against "the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and Ordination," i.e. against the hierarchy and priesthood, and broadly hinted to the "bishops and priests" that their Order was doomed to destruction. At the Diet of Augsburg he declared his followers had "very humbly informed the Pope and the bishops, that we had no wish forcibly to infringe on their rights and authority in ecclesiastical matters, but that, so long as they did not compel us to any unchristian doctrines, we were quite ready to be ordained and governed by them, and even to assist them in their administration," but his overtures having been rejected, nothing remained for him but to await the end of the priesthood when God should "in good time" so dispose. "God is wonderful"; He had "overthrown by His word" so much "papistical Mammon-service and idolatry"; "He would also be able to wipe away the rancid Chresam," i.e. to make an end of the bishops and priests in whose ordination Chrism was used.[2] Towards the end of the tract he returns to the attack on priestly ordination. He is determined "again to adjudge and commit to the Churches the call, or true ordination and consecration to the office of pastor." The members of the Church must have the "right and authority to appoint people to the office," and to entrust it to simple believers of blameless lives, even "without Chrism or butter, grease or lard."[3]

The greater portion of the writing is, however, devoted to the "Corner-Mass," i.e. the Mass generally, which according to the Catholic doctrine is equally valid whether celebrated by the priest alone in a lonely chapel or amid a

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 31, p. 308 ff. New edition by G. Kawerau in "Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke," No. 50, Halle, 1883.
[2] "Werke," *ibid.*, p. 308. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 374 f.

concourse of faithful who unite their prayers with his and communicate. For reasons readily understood, Luther prefers to use the contemptuous term " Corner-Mass."

Towards the end he himself sums up the thoughts on the Mass which he has just submitted :[1]

He had the best grounds for " being affrighted," that he and others " had once said the Corner-Mass so devoutly." After the reasons he had advanced, everyone, particularly the Papists to-day, must be driven to despair at the frightful idolatry of the Mass ; yet they " wantonly persist in their abomination." " They pervert Christ's ordinance, say their Mass not merely in disobedience to God, but also blasphemously and without any command, give the sacrament to no one but keep it for themselves alone, and, to make matters worse, are not even certain whether they are receiving merely bread and wine or the Body and Blood of Christ, because they do not follow Christ's ordinance."

Here he plainly enough questions the presence of Christ under the consecrated elements in the " Corner-Mass " and has thus made a notable stride forward in his hostility.

" Nor can anyone be certain," so he continues his summing up, " whether they [the priests, in the Canon of the Mass] pronounce the Words [of institution] or not ; hence no one is bound to believe their secret antics. Neither do they preach to anyone, though Christ commanded it." In his opinion it was essential both that the words of institution should be spoken aloud, in order to stimulate faith, and that the service should include the preaching of the Word—minor matters, which, however, became of the greatest importance to him when once he had reduced it all to the status of a mere ceremonial of edification.

He boldly concludes. " It is also impossible that they [the Popish sayers of Masses] can be right in their faith." For, as already demonstrated, " one and the same man could not believe aright and yet knowingly rage against the Word of God. Hence they can neither pray, nor offer thanks in such a way as to be acceptable to God. And, finally, over and above these abominations and crimes, they actually dare to offer to God this sacrament (if what is disgraced by so much blasphemy and abomination can be called a sacrament) and to barter and sell it to other Christians for money."

The book on the " Winckelmesse " is celebrated for the disputation between Luther and the devil which it describes. The devil sets forth the proofs against the Mass with marvellous skill, and, by his reproaches, drives the quondam monk into desperate straits. Here Luther is describing the deep remorse of conscience which he will have it he had

[1] P. 372.

to endure on account of his Masses. He is, however, merely using a literary artifice when he introduces the devil as the speaker; of this there will be more to say later.[1] Here, in addition to a letter, which so far has received but little attention, in which he himself furnishes the key to the form in which he casts his argument,[2] we may mention the fact that Luther's first draft of his writing on the "Winckelmesse," which has recently been examined, gives a portion of the devil's arguments against the Mass and without any reference to the devil, as the author's own; only later on was the devil made the spokesman for Luther's ideas.[3] We can see that it was only as the work proceeded that there occurred to Luther the happy thought of making the devil himself speak, not so much to reveal to the world the worthlessness of the Mass, as to cast if possible poor Luther into despair, because of his former Mass-sayings, and to reveal the utter perversity of the Papists, who, far from being in despair, actually boasted of the Mass.

Luther expected great things from his ruthless attack and from the scene in which the devil appears. It would be, so he fancied, a "test of the wisdom and power of the Papacy."[4] His friend Jonas, in a letter of Oct. 26, 1533, speaking of the yet unpublished "Winckelmesse," calls it a real "battering-ram" to be used against the Papacy; it was long since the Professor had been heard speaking in such a way of the Mass, the Pope and the priests.[5] Those

[1] Vol. v., xxxi., 4.

[2] To Nic. Hausmann at Dessau, Dec. 17, 1533, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 363, where he calls the writing a "*novi generis libellus*," which challenged the Papists to see whether they had an answer ready to give the devil when lying on their death-beds.

[3] A. Freytag, in Koffmane, "Die handschriftl. Überlieferung von Werken Luthers," 1907, pp. 16 and 11, where in Luther's rough notes the words first occur: "*primum argumentum diaboli.*" Freytag, however, is of opinion, that "Luther's account of the disputation with the devil certainly [?] had its origin in the Reformer's tormenting mental experiences, and that he had been actually assailed by accusing thoughts concerning his former share in the abomination of private Masses." Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 308, speaking of the disputation, also refers to the "anguish of soul" which overwhelmed him "owing to his own former share in so great a crime as he now more fully recognised it to be." Cp. our vol. v., xxxii.

[4] In the letter to Hausmann (above, n. 2): "*Lutherum hoc libello tentare papatus sapientiam et potentiam.*"

[5] To Spalatin; only an extract extant. See Jonas's "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 201: "*Lutherus scribit utilissimum, fortissimum arietem, quo quatietur, ut ferreus murus, papatus.*"

of the preachers who were fallen priests rejoiced at the advice they found in the book for the quieting of their consciences when tempted by the devil, and at its hint that they should rub their anointed hands with soap and lye the better to obliterate the mark of the Beast.

The writing was translated by Jonas into Latin, but his rendering was a very free and rhetorical one.

The interest it aroused was increased by the negative attitude which Luther seemed to assume towards the Real Presence. To many of his followers Luther seemed to come to an opinion not far removed from the Zwinglian denial of the Presence. Luther learned that Prince Johann of Anhalt and others had expressed their anxiety lest the booklet "should be understood as though I agreed with the fanatics and enemies of the Sacrament." Hence he at once issued a fresh writing entitled: "A Letter of D. Mart. Luther to a good friend concerning his book on the Corner-Masses" (1534).[1]

To attack the Sacrament and the Real Presence was, he there declared, far from his thoughts. I shall prove "that I do not hold, nor ever shall hold to all eternity, with the wrong doctrine of the foes of the Sacrament—or to speak quite plainly—with that of Carlstadt, Zwingli and their followers."[2] But by this he stood: "Whoever, like the Papists, did not celebrate the Sacrament according to the ordinance of Christ, had no right to say Christ was there"; "a counterfeit florin, struck contrary to the King's order, can never be a good one."[3] "May God bestow on all pious Christians such a mind, that, when they hear the Mass spoken of, they quake with fear and cross themselves as they would at the sight of some abomination of the devil."[4]

Johann Cochlæus at once replied to the "Winckelmesse" with an appeal to the correctness of ecclesiastical tradition. In the same year he published Innocent the Third's "*De sacro altaris mysterio*" and Isidore of Scvilla's "*De ecclesiasticis officiis.*" These venerable witnesses of Christian antiquity had, he declared, "a better claim to be believed than Luther's furies." In addition to this he also wrote a popular theological defence in the vernacular "On the Holy

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 31, p. 378 ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 379.
[3] P. 383.
[4] P. 384.

Mass and Priestly ordination" (Leipzig, 1534). In this writing he begins by emphasising the claims of ecclesiastical tradition and the teaching office of the Church: "The Church understands Scripture far better and more surely, thanks to the Holy Spirit promised by Christ and duly sent her, than Luther does by his evil spirit." He laid down the principle which he urged was the only true and reliable guide in the controversies of the age: Hold fast to the teaching of the Church rather than to the subjective interpretations of the Bible, which are often so divergent. He was not, however, altogether happy in his choice of expressions, for instance, when he exclaims: "Bible hither, Bible thither!" for this might well have given the impression, that, on his side, small account was made of the Bible. In reality this was merely his way of retorting on Luther's: "Tradition hither, Tradition thither." The theologian, who elsewhere is careful to set its true value on the Bible, seeks in this way to brand the tricks played with the Bible; similar phrases then in use were the one we already know, "Bible, Babble, Bubble," and Luther's own sarcastic saying: "The Bible is a heresy-book."[1]

Cochlæus not only brought forward, in support of the Mass, besides Holy Scripture, that tradition which Luther had treated so scornfully, but also replied to his opponent's perversions and charges on all the other counts. Of the grievous disorders which Luther said had come under his notice during his stay in Rome, what Cochlæus says is much to the point: "It is quite possible, that, among so many thousands from all lands, there may have been some such desperate villains. But it is not seemly that Luther on that score should seek to calumniate pious and devout monks and priests and make the people distrustful of them."[2]

In his familiar conversations Luther repeatedly reveals the psychological side of his attack on the Mass.

He said in 1540: "From the earliest years [of the revolt against the Church] I was grievously tempted by the thought: 'If the Mass is really the highest form of Divine worship, then, Good God, how wickedly have I behaved towards God!'" He

[1] On "Bible, Babble, Bubble," see above, vol. ii, pp. 365, 370; on the "Heresy-book," see above, p. 396.

[2] Bl. A. 3.

sought to stifle the voice of conscience, which he called a temptation, by insisting still more strongly on the worthlessness of the Mass.[1] "But this is quite certain," he says, "the Mass is Moasim."[2] Moasim, according to Dan. xi. 38, was the idol to be set up by Antichrist, in the letters of whose name, according to Luther, we find the word "Mass"; this idol, he says, was honoured with "silver, gold and precious stones," because the Mass helps to bring in such great wealth.

"From the Mass," he said in the same conversation, "came every sort of ungodliness, it was an '*abominanda abominatio*,' and yet it was held in such honour."—In another conversation in the same year we hear him say: "the Canon was looked upon as so sacred that to attack it was like attacking both heaven and earth. When first I wrote against the Mass and against the Canon I could hardly hope that people would agree with me. . . . But when my writing [the 'Sermon on the New Testament, i.e. the Mass,' 1520] was published, I found that many had shared my temptation; they thanked me for deliverance from their terror."[3]

In Luther's efforts to deliver himself and others "from their terror" and to convince himself that "this is quite certain," lies the sole explanation of his wild statements that his former saying of Mass—though undoubtedly done in good faith, and, at first, even with pleasure and devotion[4]—was his worst sin,[5] and that he would rather have "kept a bawdy house or been a robber than to have blasphemed and traduced Christ for fifteen years by the saying of Masses,"[6] and, again, that "no tongue can tell the abomination of the Mass, nor can any heart believe its wickedness. It would not have been astonishing had God destroyed the world on account of the Mass, as He will without a doubt soon do by fire."[7] The Mass embodies a "pestilential mistake of the self-righteousness of the *opus operatum*." In the Popish Mass an ignorant priest, who does not even know Latin, takes it on himself to blot out the sins of others.[8]

Equally evident, according to the Table-Talk, was the pestilent side of the Mass as a pecuniary concern. It is on this account that Luther is fond of calling it the foundation of Popery, as though the Papacy were erected on wealth.[9] His historical

[1] In this sense G. Kawerau's remark on the "Winckelmesse" is much to the point: "It is of interest on account of the insight it affords into the Reformer's efforts to arrive at certainty concerning the fundamentals of his religious views." In the Introduction to the edition quoted above, p. 519 n. 1.

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 132.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[4] See the letter written before his first Mass, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 10.

[5] See "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 508; Erl. ed., 30, p. 372. Above, p. 509 n. 3.

[6] Above, vol. iii., p. 130.

[7] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 122.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

knowledge of the actual facts is as great here as it is when, in his Table-Talk, he makes private Masses originate in the time of Pope Gregory I († 604).[1]

Incidentally he describes quite frankly one way in which he had endeavoured to overthrow the Mass: At first it had seemed to him impossible to achieve its fall because its roots were so deeply imbedded in the human heart. "But when once the Sacrament is received under both kinds, the Mass will not stand much longer."[2]—We have already had occasion to describe the underhand measures he recommended in the warfare against the Mass (Vol. ii., p. 321 f.).

In part at least, he could congratulate himself on the success of his unholy efforts. "If our Lord God allows me to die a natural death, He will be playing a nasty trick on the Papists, because they will have failed to burn the man who has thus brought the Mass to nought."[3]

Denunciation of the Mass naturally occupies a place in Luther's Articles of Schmalkalden.[4] Since the latter were incorporated in the "Symbolic Books" of the Lutheran Evangelical Church and figure in the Book of Concord with the three oldest Œcumenical Creeds, the Confession of Augsburg, etc., as writings "recognised and accepted as godly truths by our blessed forefathers and by us," condemnation of the Mass became as much a traditional canon within the Protestant fold as Luther himself could have desired.

In the Schmalkalden Articles we find, after the first article on Justification by Faith alone, a second article on the office and work of Jesus Christ which declares: "That the Mass among the Papists must be the greatest and most frightful abomination" because it is "in direct and violent opposition" to the first article, according to which the Lamb of God alone delivers man from sin, not "a wicked or pious minister of the Mass by his work." The Mass is a "work of men, yea, of wicked knaves," a source "of unspeakable abuses by the buying and selling of Masses," defended by the Papists only because they "know very well, that if the Mass falls, the Papacy too must perish." Over and above all this, that dragon's tail, which is the Mass, has produced much filth and vermin and many forms of idolatry: First of all Purgatory; for the execrable market of Masses

[1] *Ibid.* On Gregory the Great, see above, p. 517 n. 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 119. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[4] Symbol. Bücher[10], p. 301 ff. "Luthers Werke," Erl. ed., 25[2], p. 174 ff.

for the dead produced that " devilish spectre " of Purgatory. Secondly, " on account of it evil spirits have performed much trickery by appearing as the souls of men " ; the devils " with unspeakable roguery " demanded Masses, etc. " Thirdly, pilgrimages, whereby people ran after Masses, forgiveness of sins, and the Grace of God, for the Mass ruled everything " and caused men to run after " hurtful, devilish will-o'-the-wisps." " Fourthly, the brotherhoods " with their Masses, etc., are also " contrary to the first article of the Atonement." " Fifthly, the holy things " (relics) were also " supposed to effect forgiveness of sin as being a good work and worship of God like the Mass." " Sixthly, here belong also the beloved Indulgence " in which " Judas incarnate, i.e. the Pope, sells the merits of Christ."—Hence even Indulgences are made out to be one of the unhappy consequences of the Mass !

It is a relief, after such lamentable utterances which could only have been accepted by people whom prejudice in Luther's favour had rendered blind, to recall the clear statements—so full of conviction—on the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, which occur in the very writings in which Luther attacks the Mass. Our second volume concluded with a cheering confession on the part of the Wittenberg Professor of his faith in the Trinity and Incarnation, a confession which both did him honour and expressed those consoling and incontrovertible truths which constitute the common treasure of the Christian creeds. The present volume also, after the sad pictures of dissent of which it is only too full, may charitably end with the words in which Luther voices his belief in the Sacrament of the Altar, the lasting memorial of Divine Love, in which our Lord never ceases to pray for unity amongst those bidden as guests to His table.

" I hereby confess before God and the whole world that I believe and do not doubt, and with the help and grace of my dear Lord Jesus Christ will maintain even to that Day, that where Mass is celebrated according to Christ's ordinance whether amongst us Lutherans or in the Papacy, or in Greece or in India (even though under one kind only—though that is wrong and an abuse), there is present under the species of the Bread, the true Body of Christ given for

us on the cross, and, under the species of wine, the true Blood of Christ shed for us; nor is it a spiritual or fictitious Body and Blood, but the true natural Body and Blood taken of the holy, virginal, and really human body of Mary, without the intervention of any man but conceived of the Holy Ghost alone; which Body and Blood of Christ now sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty of God in the Divine Person, which is Christ Jesus, true, real, and eternal God, with the Father of Whom He is begotten from all eternity, etc. And that same Body and Blood of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, not only the Saints and those who are worthy, but also sinners and the unworthy truly handle and receive, bodily though invisibly, with hands, mouth, chalice, paten, corporal, or whatever else be used when it is given and received in the Mass."

"This is my faith, this I know, and no one shall take it from me."

He had always, so he insists, by his testimony upheld the "clear, plain text of the Gospel" against heresies old and new, and withstood the "devil's malice and work in the service and for the betterment of my dear brothers and sisters, in accordance with Christian charity."[1]

[1] "Brieff von seinem Buch der Winckelmessen," "Werke," Erl. ed., 31, p. 381 f.

END OF VOL. IV

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PLYMOUTH